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ABSTRACT

This paper illustrates the complexity of the organizations and political processes at work in organizing for school reform in Chicago, Illinois. In addition to community organizations, Local School Councils have emerged as their own force in organizing and advocating to improve both individual schools and citywide policies. Citywide education reform organizations also contribute essential elements (research, long-term strategy, and coalition building) to the leadership development, organizing, and advocacy that has made the Chicago Public Schools a dramatic example of parent decision-making power in U.S. urban school districts. Ten chapters include: (1) "A Profile of the Chicago Public School System"; (2) "The Political Context of School Reform in the Chicago Public Schools"; (3) "Community Organizing in Chicago: Past and Present"; (4) "Who is Organizing for School Reform in Chicago?"; (5) "Local School Councils and Citywide School Reform Organizations"; (6) "What are Their Organizing Issues?" (7) "What Strategies Do the Organizations Use?" (8) "What Successes Have the Organizations Had?" (9) "What Obstacles and Challenges Do the Organizations Face?"; and (10) "Conclusions and Recommendations" (e.g., community organizations need consistent long-term support, and diversity of organizations is necessary). Tables are appended. (Contains 42 footnotes.) (SM)

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Mapping School Reform Organizing in Chicago 1985 – 2000

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INTRODUCTION

Sullivan Local School Council Organizes for a New School

Sylvia Ortega, Local School Council member, other LSC members, parents and community members, Latino and black, from the Sullivan School in South Chicago had been seeking a remedy since 1995 for the overcrowding of their school, where over 750 students were crammed into a building that should hold 500 students. Temporary walls divided classrooms and the large halls of the old building to create pullout classrooms, offices for counselors, and space for two classes in one room. Students were too crowded to learn well, the school could not carry out its intended education improvement plan, and overcrowding hampered the school's ability to implement specialized programs, like bilingual education and special education. A temporary solution was to create an annex for 250 students by leasing an old parochial school with building code violations. Neither the Chicago Public Schools nor the church took responsibility for the violations.

South Chicago had recently received a Tax Increment Financing district, so the Sullivan group had applied pressure to city officials to see if TIF funds could be allocated for a new school. TIF officials directed parents to the CPS. By 1999 the CPS made a public commitment to build a new school, but CPS wasn't following their own timeline. With the support of the principal and community residents, the LSC parents intensified their organizing.

The parents came to a Neighborhood Capital Budget Group monthly workshop on TIFs asking how to get a new building for Sullivan School. Following the workshop, the LSC parents pursued the lead organizer on NCBG's school initiative, Dion Miller Perez. He advised them to send letters to elected officials about their needs, arguing that a public commitment had been made, but was not being honored in a speedy fashion. He suggested that they take photos of the conditions of the school and of the property that the Board had already purchased for the school site, where gangs were setting fire to abandoned buildings, creating an "attractive nuisance." The Mayor was currently haranguing private owners who were being slumlords, what about the CPS as landlord?

> They didn't need their school administration to get people; they had their own networks [in the school] from their school activities and their pressure for TIF financing. In South Chicago, people have seen organizations come and go, so they have assimilated the organizing techniques. These parents were smart at assessing how strong people's commitments are. They have been through the whole decline of the steel industry – they're cynical and savvy about official promises.
> — Dion Miller Perez, Neighborhood Capital Budget Group

In 1995 United Neighborhood Organization (UNO), a citywide Latino community organization active in many Latino neighborhoods, worked for a short period of time to get a new Sullivan School, but parents viewed them as taking credit for the organizing parents had done. NCBG had been organizing around school construction since 1994, and by 1999 their pressure on the Board of Education resulted in the Board publishing a yearly budget book, one page per school, outlining school conditions, capital improvement plans, costs, timelines, and progress made. With this book, schools could assess how fast the system was moving on any school's timeline.

> The budget book is on their (CPS) web site — we designed that too. We have succeeded in getting [the Board] to hold and advertise public forums for three consecutive years ...we want people from across the city to see the necessity for greater institutional change. [We tell them to] think and act locally, and when you succeed, think and act more globally.
> — Jackie Leavy, Neighborhood Capital Budget Group

Perez toured the school and talked with staff. He went to meetings with LSC, parents and community, talked on the phone with them and sent information. The LSC and parents came to NCBG trainings and Perez helped the Sullivan parents develop strategies to approach elected officials. The new Tenth Ward alderman, John Pope had a direct line to Mayor Daley and had been his candidate in the recent election. While some of the parents had worked for Pope's opponent, they held cordial meetings with Pope, and he wanted to make peace with perceived enemies. He called the Mayor and pressured him for action in his ward.

Located in the Congressional district of Jesse Jackson Jr., Sullivan School saw their representative as a potential ally. While at first receptive to the Sullivan parents, Jackson did not want to cause friction with the CPS, where both he and his father had many connections. Board officials worked for Rainbow PUSH and on the Jacksons' electoral campaigns. However, "the more he ducked, the more he became their target," Miller said. Rep. Jackson visited Sullivan unannounced one morning before school with Tim Martin, Chief Operating Officer of the CPS, but parents quickly learned of the visit. They told his office, "We have 150 parents who will be waiting to hear from you." They demanded he call them and share information he had learned, which he did. When the Sullivan parents traveled to Washington, D.C., with NCBG for a national conference on school construction in February 2000, they sat in at his office. Jackson was out of town, so they told his staff, "We'll remember this. We won't vote for him and we know all the registered voters in his neighborhood."

Of the six main leaders of the Sullivan LSC group, two worked nearly full-time on this campaign. On their own turf in South Chicago they could produce 150 –200 people for a meeting with Alderman Pope. Renting school buses, they took 40-60 LSC members and parents to Capital Improvement Hearings held across the city. The group also worked with an inside person in CPS who advised them to keep pressure up, that the officials were feeling the heat. Gery Chico, chairman of the School Board, was from South Chicago and had a good relationship with Alderman Pope. Tim Martin, CPS Chief Operating Engineer, in charge of all rehab and construction, listened to Chico. Rep. Jackson knew and talked directly to Paul Vallas, CPS Chief Executive Officer.

The breaking point came in early 2000 at a South Chicago TIF Taskforce meeting. Giacomo Mancuso, CPS Director of Capital Planning, announced that excavation and clearing of property would begin within a few months and then building would start. The Sullivan parents still did not know what would happen. Other schools had gotten to this point and hopes were dashed. But they began to see excavation and took photos of the abandoned buildings being torn down. Construction is now underway and the Board has promised that by the end of 2001 the new school will be open.

* * *

This story illustrates the complexity of the organizations and political process at work in organizing for school reform in Chicago. In addition to community organizations, the Local School Councils have emerged as their own force in organizing and advocating to improve both individual schools and citywide policies. Citywide education reform organizations, such as Neighborhood Capital Budget Group, also contribute essential elements — research, long-term strategy, coalition building, — to the leadership development, organizing and advocacy that has made the Chicago Public Schools the most dramatic example of parent decision-making power in U.S. urban school districts. This mapping project has created new categories, such as Local School Councils and citywide support organizations, that capture the reality of day-to-day organizing in Chicago.

I. CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS SYSTEM PROFILE

Size of System

For the 2000-2001 school year, the Chicago Public School system enrolled approximately 432,000 students, making it the third largest school district in the United States after New York City and Los Angeles. Enrollment has shown a small but steady increase since 1995, when enrollment was nearly 411,000 students. In the 2000-2001 academic year there are approximately 600 schools: 451 elementary schools (mostly K-8), 28 middle schools, 79 high schools, including 9 academic preparation centers for students who do not pass the 8th grade Iowa Tests in reading and math at a level sufficient to move into regular high school, 27 special education schools, and 40 new "alternative schools." The alternative schools include 6 Safe School sites, for students who have committed severe infractions of the discipline code (i.e., violence, drugs), and 28 dropout sites. Included in the numbers are 16 charter schools.[1]

Budget and Staff

CPS has an estimated operating budget of $3.5 billion for the current 2000-2001 fiscal year. The budget is made up of $1.552 billion from local sources, $1.283 billion from state sources, and $590 million from federal sources. During the 1997-98 school year, the operating expenditure per pupil was $7,325.[2]

CPS is budgeted for 45,882 staff positions: 580 principals, 26,086 teachers, 12,937 non-teaching school positions, 3,056 regional office employees, and 1,223 central office employees. Of the 580 principals in CPS, 52.6% are African-American, 1.2% Asian, 12.3% Latino, 0.2% Native American, and 33.8% White. Of the 26,086 teachers in CPS, 42.1% are African-American, 2.1% Asian, 10.5% Latino, 0.4% Native American, and 45.1% White.[3]

Administrative Structure

Since 1995 the CPS has been divided into six administrative districts, each of which includes approximately 100 schools. The boundary lines run east and west across the city and divide the city into six regions beginning with Region 1 at the northern end of the city and ending with Region 6 at the southern edge of the city.

Governance Structure

The governance structure of the Chicago Public Schools was dramatically redefined to feature local school decision-making by the Chicago School Reform Law, passed by the Illinois legislature and signed into law by Republican Governor James Thompson in 1988. The law limited the powers of the central administration and created a Local School Council at each school with three key decision-making powers.

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[1] Chicago Public Schools website (2000). *CPS at a Glance*. Chicago: www.cps.k12.il.us/CPS_at_a_Glance/cps_at_a_glance.html.

[2] (2000). FY 2001 Budget Overview. Chicago Public Schools Website: www.cps.k12.il.us/AboutCPS/Financial_Information/FY2001_Final_Budget/2BdgtOver3.pdf.

[3] Chicago Public Schools website (2000).

- Hire their principal on a four-year performance contract, effectively abolishing lifetime principal tenure.
- Decide how the discretionary funds of the school budget would be spent (average of $500,000 per school for State Chapter 1 funds).
- Help develop and approve a three-year School Improvement Plan, revising it each year.

From 1988-1995 the nine-member School Board was appointed by the Mayor, based on recommendations from the School Board Nominating Commission, composed of elected LSC representatives from eleven District Councils. The School Reform Law was amended by the legislature in 1995 in an effort to consolidate authority over the central administration in the hands of the Mayor and create a strong central administration with authority to intervene in non-performing schools. One change eliminated the School Board Nominating Commission. The mayor assumed direct appointment power over a five-member Board of Trustees; the Superintendent (renamed for 1995-1999 as the Chief Executive Officer); and the Chairman of the Board of Trustees. Nevertheless, the basic structure of school level decision-making was kept intact.

Local School Councils

Chicago's Local School Councils have eleven members in the elementary schools: 6 parents, 2 community representatives, 2 teachers, and the principal. Parent and community representatives are elected every two years by the parents and community residents of the school's attendance district. The teachers elect the teacher representatives, and the principal is selected by the LSC. In high schools the LSC also includes a student representative, elected by the school's students; the student representative has full participation rights, with the exception of voting on the principals' contract. The chair of the LSC must be a parent. Thus, unlike the prevailing national patterns of parent involvement in large urban school district decision-making, parents were not in an advisory capacity; they hire the principal on a contractual basis and are responsible for making policy for the school. The law clarified that the day-to-day implementation of that policy was the primary responsibility of the principal.

The Central and District Offices

The School Reform law diminished the direct authority of the central administrative office over schools, placing the Central Office in the role of supporting school-level initiatives and carrying out certain critical responsibilities. These responsibilities included the implementation and monitoring of federal and state education mandates (i.e., special education, bilingual education); setting systemwide curriculum standards; investigating complaints of illegal or unethical behavior; testing, research, and evaluation. The School Reform Law reduced the number of administrative districts from 23 to 11. The new district offices had much smaller staffs, with few services to offer, and little authority over local schools.

Student Demographic and Achievement Profile: Structural Inequities

For the year 2000-2001, the racial/ethnic background of students enrolled in Chicago Public Schools is as follows: 52.3% are African American, 3.2% Asian, 34.4% Latino, 0.2% Native American, and 9.9% White. Of those 432,000 students, 13.7% are limited-English-proficient, 85.6% low-income, and 12% have special education needs. Official data indicates that the district has a 91.6% attendance rate, a 26.6% mobility rate, and that 4.3% of students are chronic truants.[4] For the 1999-2000 school year CPS reported an annual dropout rate of 15.6%, and a four-year drop out rate of 41.7%, based on tracking an entering freshman class over four years.[5]

The major test used to track and compare academic achievement over the past thirty years has been the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (used in grades 3 to 8), and the Tests of Academic Proficiency (TAP Test), used in the high schools. A ten-year comparison shows some improvement at the elementary level, from 21.8% to 36.2% reading at or above the national average by 2000. However, test scores published by the Chicago Public Schools have limitations on their reliability and validity, including the fact that the same forms of the Iowa test have been repeatedly given over the last several years, and that Chicago employs norms developed in the 1980s. If Chicago did use the newer national norms that are available, Iowa scores would most likely decline.

For high schools the system reports a 10% reading gain from 25.4% in 1993 to 35.4% in 2000. At the high school level, research has shown that the improvement in student scores, from 25% to 35% of students reading at or above grade level, is attributable to two main factors: 1) Students are entering high school better prepared, and 2) low-achieving students are being screened out of high school by the school system's promotion policies.[6] Research has documented policies and practices of pushing more and more students out of high school for poor attendance, behavior, and capricious administrative decisions. For each of the past five years the total high school enrollment has declined by 50%, from entering freshman to graduating seniors. While the system most recently reported a four-year drop out rate of 41.7%, the numbers show that the senior class is half the size of the freshman class.

As documented in the 1987 Designs for Change study, "The New Improved Sorting Machine," Chicago's high schools were highly stratified then and have become even more so, with the increased number of magnet schools and magnet programs in neighborhood schools established in the past four years. Mayor Daley directed the increase in magnet schools and programs as a key to his public commitment to attracting more middle class students back to the public schools.[7]

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[4] Philip J. Hansen (1999). *Racial/Ethnic Survey: Reported as of September 30, 1999.* Chicago: Chicago Public Schools Office of Accountability, Department of Compliance; and (2000). *Galileo Elementary Math and Science School Academy: Illinois School Report Card 2000.* Illinois State Board of Education Website: ftpirptcard.isbe.state.il.us/ReportCard2000/01629902878.pdf.

[5] (2000, June). CPS dropout rates: let me count the ways. *Catalyst*, XI (9): 19.

[6] G. Alred Hess, Jr. and Solomon Cytrynbaum (2000). *The Effort to Redesign Chicago High Schools: Effects on Schools and Achievement.* Evanston: Center for Urban School Policy Northwestern University.

Student outcomes statistics for these schools show consistent patterns of achievement being inversely proportional to the percent of low-income students and the degree of selectivity of the schools' admissions processes. In other words, students show the highest achievement at the schools with the fewest low-income students and the greatest degree of selectivity in the admissions process. Schools with the highest proportion of low-income students had lower level courses, higher course failure rates, higher absenteeism, higher truancy, higher suspension rates, and higher drop-out rates. Three pre-existing and six new magnet high schools now require students to take entrance exams. At the other end of the spectrum, several non-selective low-income neighborhood high schools have been targeted as failing high schools for the past five years for and put under various forms of restructuring and management by the Central Office, but show little or no improvement, regardless of the mandated intervention.

Funding

In 1976 the State of Illinois contributed approximately 50% to the funding of each local district based on a per student formula, the federal government provided about 8-10%, and the remainder was provided by local property taxes in each district. Beginning in 1976, Republican Governor James Thompson and the state legislature moved steadily to reduce the state tax contribution to local districts until the rate reached approximately 32% by 1995, where it remained until Governors Edgar and Ryan slightly increased the state contribution beginning in 1996 to just over 37% in 2001. This overall decline in state support has badly hurt local districts, where intense competition over the use of property tax dollars often leads to the defeat of school bond issues. The decline has led to cutbacks in staff, program, innovation, and failure to maintain, let alone expand, existing structures, unless the district is extremely wealthy and has a large property base and constituency committed to quality education.

During the twenty-five years since Governor Thompson was elected, two serious statewide campaigns failed to convince the state legislature to markedly increase the portion of state taxes flowing to the local districts, or to revise state funding formulas to help equalize the wide range in property wealth in the over 900 school districts throughout the state. A major lawsuit filed to create greater equality in local funding through revision of the state funding formulas and to increase the overall state contribution met a similar end, ultimately being rejected by the Illinois Supreme Court.

In the first 100 days of office in 2000, Governor Ryan proposed and saw successfully passed a giant "BUILD Illinois" program that apportioned funds to local government for infrastructure development, transportation, and more support for education, specifically, school facilities, repairs, and construction. This trend may continue, depending on support for state or federal funding for school construction. While Illinois legislators talk about creating fairer state school funding formulas, they are extremely wary of changing the formulas or increasing any state tax (sales tax, property tax, or corporate and personal income tax, which are comparatively low and an obvious potential source of increased state revenue for public schools).

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[7] Designs for Change (1987). *The New Improved Sorting Machine*. Chicago: Author.

State of School Facilities

Since at least 1950, the CPS system facilities have suffered from the long-term under-investment in facilities that characterize most Northern urban school systems. The Chicago system failed to repair and maintain aging structures, built at the turn of the century; funded shoddy construction of some new schools; and provided inadequate short-term solutions (i.e., "demountable classrooms" erected on school playgrounds). Further, the system made little response to the changing demographics of the city, resulting in an imbalance of highly overcrowded schools in neighborhoods with rapidly increasing population (primarily in Latino neighborhoods), and underutilized space in neighborhoods experiencing a decline in population.

By the mid 1990's, a typical turn-of-the century CPS school, a three-story red brick building, had crumbling plaster walls that had not been repaired or painted for ten or twenty years; a leaking roof; a poorly performing heating system and no air conditioning; broken toilets and sinks in student bathrooms; and inadequate wiring for modern technology, especially computer networks. As we will detail, many communities, energized by the passing of the Chicago School Reform Law, formed coalitions and led efforts to improve local school facilities, both to relieve overcrowding and to repair neglected buildings.

When Mayor Daley effectively asserted greater authority over the Chicago Public Schools through the 1995 amendments to the School Reform Law, he launched a $1.45 billion capital improvement plan to modernize the system's schools. Capital improvements during the 1998-99 school year resulted in $161 million for new schools, $304 million for school additions, $29 million for temporary units, and $671 million for major rehab.[8] Initial research indicated that capital improvements were taking place in an inequitable manner throughout the six districts of the city.[9] Consistent with the Mayor's public vow to bring the middle class back into the public school system, investment has been skewed in favor of lavish new magnet schools in predominantly white, middle class neighborhoods in the Central City and North Side, leaving the neighborhood, selective and magnet schools on the South and West Sides comparatively under-funded and unimproved.[10] Given other policies to decrease spending on transportation to implement desegregation in the system's magnet schools, the overall access to superior educational facilities by African-American and Latino students of any class is declining.

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[8] Dan Weissmann (1998, November). Everyone wins, some win more. *Catalyst*, X(3):1,4-9.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Debra Williams (2000, December). Board gives North Side preps lavish facilities, ample planning time. *Catalyst*, XII(4): 4-9.

II. THE POLITICAL CONTEXT OF SCHOOL REFORM IN THE CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The political structure of the city has played a key role in the history of school reform that shapes the extent of local governance in the Chicago Public School System. In the late 1980's, a grassroots school reform movement in Chicago was able to pass a state law, applying only to Chicago, that restructured the Chicago school system to decentralize decision-making power to the local schools. In the words of Michael Katz, University of Pennsylvania professor and leading urban education historian:

> The 1988 Chicago school reform law represents the most radical attempt to restructure an urban school system in the last hundred years. It redefined the governance of the schools, the conditions of teaching and learning, and the relations of schools to their various communities.[11]

The school reform movement built on the political momentum behind the election of the city's first black mayor, Harold Washington, in 1983. Washington was elected by a multi-racial activist movement of African-Americans, Whites, and Latinos. The dominant Democratic Party organization, led by Irish politicians, based its support in working class ethnic neighborhoods and in black neighborhoods under the leadership of black politicians who rarely challenged party leaders.

The civil rights movement of the '60's and '70's encouraged Chicago's African-Americans to build independent local organizations. Harold Washington, a long term African-American legislator, ran for mayor in 1983 and won with the support of black community, which had mounted vigorous voter registration drives, and a citywide rainbow coalition of blacks, whites and Latinos. He governed with a popular rhetoric that neighborhood institutions belonged to the people that lived in the neighborhood; he championed more resources going into local neighborhood development and a less single-minded focus on central city development.

The grassroots school reform movement developed in this context. In 1985 three reports by independent advocacy groups indicated that the four-year dropout rate in the school system was about 50%, when the school system had been claiming that the dropout rate was 7%.[12] Highly publicized, these reports helped undermine the school system's legitimacy. In 1986 Designs for Change decided to press for the fundamental restructuring of the Chicago school system through state law, by shifting authority to the school level and began research on models of local decision-making across the United States. A coalition of diverse school reform and community groups, and

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[11] Michael Katz (1988). *First Reliable Evidence Shows Major Positive Impact of Chicago's 1988 School Reform Law.* from Teachers College Record. New York: Columbia University Press.

[12] Designs for Change (1985, January). *The Bottom Line: Chicago's failing schools and how to save them.* Chicago: Author; G. Alfred Hess, Jr. (1985, April). *Dropouts From the Chicago Public Schools: An analysis of the classes of 1982, 1983, and 1984.* Chicago: Chicago Panel on Public School Policy and Finance; Illinois State Task Force on Hispanic Dropouts (1985, March). *A Generation Too Precious to Waste.* Chicago: Author.

Chicagoans United to Reform Education (CURE) began to develop a detailed plan for restructuring the school system. Key business leaders, disenchanted with the school system's failure to carry administrative and fiscal reforms, supported CURE. In September 1987, a month-long teachers' strike, the ninth strike in 18 years, further undermined the credibility of both the school system leadership and the teachers' union. When the strike ended, Mayor Washington convened an Education Summit to develop plans to restructure the school system.

Though Mayor Washington suddenly died early in his second term, the Summit progressed, and a larger coalition, the Alliance for Better Chicago Schools (ABCs Coalition), mounted a campaign in Springfield, the state capital, to secure passage of a law to restructure the CPS. The well-organized ABCs Coalition campaign worked for four months to pass their bill in Springfield, supported by the constant presence of parents, school reformers, business executives, and lobbyists. The Chicago School Reform Act was passed, amended with minor changes, passed again, and signed by the Governor in December 1988, to take effect in 1989. On the October night in 1990 that the LSCs were sworn into office, over 5000 people filled the pavilion at the University of Illinois-Chicago, as 3,200 African Americans (56%), 1,000 Latinos (23%), and 870 whites (20%) joined the ranks of elected school officials nationwide. This reform nearly doubled the number of African American and Latinos involved in educational policy-making in the United States.[13]

Additional Provisions of the 1988 Law. Beyond the three key powers of Local School Councils, described above in Section 1, other key provisions of the 1988 Reform Act strengthened the ability of the LSCs to work for meaningful school improvement:

- **New Principal Powers.** Gave principals a pivotal school leadership role and more authority in establishing and carrying out instruction and budget priorities, and in hiring and supervising school staff.
- **New Teacher Powers.** Gave teachers a greater decision-making and advisory voice, through their seats on the Local School Councils and a Professional Personnel Advisory Committee at each school that worked with the principal and LSC on curriculum and school improvement.
- **Infusion of Funds, Targeted to Low-Income Schools and Under School Control.** Required that over a five-year period, state money for educating low-income students (State Chapter 1 funds) must be increasingly placed under school control and be made supplementary to a fair share of other school system funds. In the 1997-98 school year, State Chapter 1 funds that a school could focus on its improvement priorities amounted to $261 million in new dollars systemwide, or about $470,000 per school.

Relationship Between Schools, Teachers and Parents

The School Reform law introduced parents as key decision-makers at each local school in Chicago. The research shows that over half of the LSCs have been able to do well enough to make significant improvements in the achievement of their schools, particularly at the elementary schools. The high schools have not responded as well to the new collaborative roles of stakeholders, and as of the writing of this report are a serious piece of unfinished business, though more visible on the citywide reform agenda of the Mayor and the school reform community.

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[13] Designs for Change (1991, February). *Closer Look*. Chicago: Author.

Extensive research on the effects of Chicago School Reform Law has been carried out, by independent research groups, university faculty and students, particularly, and the Consortium on Chicago School Research at the University of Chicago. One critical focus of this research has been the relationships between principals, teachers, parents, and Local School Councils. In the 1990's, using the conceptual framework of the "Five Essential Supports for Student Learning" (See Table 8), developed by Designs for Change, the Consortium carried out several studies — of principals, of teachers, of LSCs, and of student performance — that documented perceptions of change in the elementary schools, relationships among adults, and student performance.[14] Using advanced statistical methods to address measurement problems in the use of the Iowa Test results, the Consortium concluded that for the period from 1990-1996 in the elementary schools: "Overall, our analyses indicate broad-based systemwide improvements in student learning, stronger in mathematics, but also in reading."[15]

Designs for Change analyzed the trend in elementary school reading achievement between 1990-1997,[16] and found a set of practices that was significantly different in elementary schools that were low-achieving in 1990 but then gained substantially in reading from 1990 to 1997, as compared with similar low-achieving schools that were low-achieving in 1990, and subsequently made no significant test improvement. A major finding was the strong relationship between a high level of collaboration and trust among the adults, teacher commitment, and improved educational quality and student achievement through working together, staff development, resolving conflicts, planning the School Improvement Plan, and budgeting for improved student achievement. Approximately 26%, or 111, of the elementary schools showed Substantially Up improvement. In these schools the teachers reported a significant level of involvement in decisions, of teacher collaboration, teachers taking collective responsibility for the school's improvement, trust among teachers, trust of the principal, and trust among teachers and parents. They also rated the LSC more highly in contributing to improving the school's educational program and environment. Nearly half of the elementary schools showed no trend, with only slight increases (36%) or slight declines (12%). These schools reported low levels of collaboration among the principal, teachers, LSC, and parents.

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[14] Penny Bender Sebring, Anthony S. Bryk, Melissa Roderick, Eric Camburn, Stuart Luppescu, Yeow Meng Thum, BetsAnn Smith, and Joseph Kahne (1996, July). *Charting Reform in Chicago: The Students Speak.* Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research; John Q. Easton, Anthony S. Bryk, Mary E. Driscoll, John G. Kotsakis, Penny A. Sebring, and Arie J. van der Ploeg (1991). *Charting Reform: The Teachers' Turn.* Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research; and Fred M. Newmann and Karin Sconzert (2000, June). *School Improvement with External Partners.* Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research.

[15] Anthony S. Bryk, Yeow Meng Thum, John Q. Easton, and Stuart Luppescu (1998, March). *Academic Productivity of Chicago Public Elementary Schools.* Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research, p. 35.

[16] Designs for Change (1998, April). *What Makes These Schools Stand Out: Chicago Elementary Schools with a Seven-Year Trend of Improved Reading Achievement.* Chicago: Author.

Other Individuals and Groups with Power Over Education in Chicago

The Mayor. In previous decades, the mayor's office had used the public schools as a source of patronage jobs, so that principals, non-teaching staff, and some teachers were likely to hold their job through a personal connection to an alderman or committeeman. Further, the public schools were a lucrative source of contracts for vendors in favor with the current mayor, for everything from school venders to construction. Under public scrutiny of hiring and spending scandals and pressure from the civil rights movement, Mayor Richard J. Daley, publicly distanced himself from the Chicago Public Schools during his term of office (1955 - 1976). Local school staff hiring became somewhat more professional; political connections to the upper echelon staff and financial connections remained, however, but were less visible. Leadership of the central office bureaucracy became predominantly African-American, and the CPS became the largest single employer of African-American professionals in the state.

Mayor Richard M. Daley, son of the former mayor, was elected in 1991. In his first term he observed that Local School Councils were becoming autonomous bases for local neighborhood leaders, who were not immediately controllable by the Democratic Party organization. Daley believed that the public held him accountable for progress in the schools, but that he lacked significant authority to achieve it. In 1995, Mayor Richard M. Daley went to Springfield to campaign for changes in the 1988 School Reform Act.

The 1995 Reform Act Amendments. The General Assembly made several major changes in the Chicago School Reform Act in May 1995. The basic structure of school-level decision making was kept intact; indeed, principals were, for the first time, given clear authority over school custodians and food service staff. However, the state legislature gave Chicago's Mayor a major role in making key systemwide decisions and, at the same time, weakened the power of the Chicago Teachers Union, which was limited to bargaining over wages and benefits, but not over working conditions. Some key changes were the following:

- The Mayor was given authority to directly appoint a five-person Board of Trustees and a Chief Executive Officer.
- The Board of Trustees was given broad authority to intervene in non-performing schools.
- The Board of Trustees was given increased financial flexibility and access to a substantial amount of additional unrestricted revenue.
- The Board of Trustees was given broad powers to privatize a range of school system activities, such as building repairs.

Subsequent Events. In June 1995, Chicago's Mayor Daley appointed his former Budget Director, Paul Vallas, as the school system's Chief Executive Officer, and his former Chief of Staff, Gery Chico, as President of the school system's Board of Trustees. This new leadership team aggressively pressed an agenda of:

- Facilities improvement, with some school facility services privatization.

- Central administration restructuring for greater control over local schools, with the authority to reconstitute schools and actually dismiss, rather than transfer, staff at these schools.
- An accountability system based on test score results and a top-down uniform "back to basics" curriculum.
- Legislative changes to limit powers of the Local School Councils and assertions that the schools had not significantly improved from 1990-1995

Each of these initiatives has involved both citywide reform organizations and local community organizations in struggles to maintain local school improvement initiatives and the exercise of LSCs' decision-making powers. Yet, with school-level powers left largely intact, Chicago remains the most decentralized big city educational system in the country.

The accountability program administered by the new central Accountability Office has dominated the educational policies of this administration. The Central Office[17] uses Iowa test scores to identify poorly performing schools and to hold individual students back. Beginning in October 1996, the Central Office put over 100 low-scoring schools on probation. The Central Office Accountability Office assign probation managers and external partners from universities and non-profits and also mandates use of the schools' discretionary funds for summer school and after school programs, based on the Board's scripted curriculum designed to boost scores on the Iowa Tests. The Board began wholesale reconstitution of failing high schools in June 1997, where they replaced principals and teachers. Since many of the new leadership's educational reforms are test-driven and focused on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, there is great pressure on schools to focus on teaching to the Iowa Test. This pressure creates local school conflicts between (1) sticking with longer-term initiatives to restructure the school and improve instruction undertaken before 1995 and (2) placing the primary focus on short-term tactics for improving Iowa test scores. The Central Office's accountability program has engaged Local School Councils and citywide and community-based organizations in campaigns to maintain local school momentum for existing improvement efforts, and oppose the harmful effects of the mandated accountability program.

Central office intervention in school decision-making was further aided by subsequent legislation, signed by the Governor in August 1996, allowing the central board to set qualifications and performance requirements for the initial hiring and rehiring of principals by Local School Councils. Under the 1988 School Reform Act, LSCs were previously free to select as their principal anyone who held Illinois state certification as an administrator. The 1996 policy has increased conflicts between the central board and local schools as LSCs work to exercise their basic legal powers to evaluate principals and appoint the principal of their choice.

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[17] The term "Central Office" refers to the CPS administration, especially in the context of carrying out policies. The "Board" refers to the Board of Education, especially in reference to passing policies.

The Superintendent. The first two superintendents under the School Reform Law, Ted Kimbrough and Argie Johnson, favored central office top-down decision-making, as reflective of their training and experience; each, however, was chosen for the position because of some indication that they would support increased local decision-making and school-level initiatives for improvement. Of the two, Argie Johnson was most open to creating "inside-outside" partnerships with reform groups, the business community, and other civic organizations to redesign school system policies; promoting research-based educational practices; and supporting LSC decision-making.

Since 1995, when Mayor Daley appointed his former Budget Director, Paul Vallas, as Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Vallas has assumed an aggressive public stance asserting the power of the Central Office to establish top-down citywide educational policy mandates, to restructure the central office, and to interfere with the local decision powers of Local School Councils, especially their right to select and hire the principal. Mr. Vallas became a highly visible, constantly quoted, hands-on CEO as he visited local schools to inaugurate a constant stream of new programs, often with a short shelf life. Creating a sophisticated in-house communications and public relations department, Mr. Vallas has developed favorable media relations that have promoted his actions with little criticism — until the last two years, when the major media have been more critical, exposing possible tensions between Mr. Vallas, Mr. Chico, and the Mayor. Mr. Vallas reached out to ministers, community organizations, social service agencies, churches, and businesses, and established a dense network of popular supporters, aided by the contracts and jobs that he commands. He has publicly railed against the school reform groups, calling them "special interest groups fed by the foundations." However, Local School Councils, community organizations, and the supporting school reform advocacy, legal, research, and training organizations waged a consistent campaign to defend local school decision-making and to oppose Board efforts to rewrite the law, harass Local School Councils in selecting principals, and reduce discretionary funds under LSC control.

The Reform Community. Since the early days of the CURE and ABCs coalitions that successfully lobbied and passed the Chicago School Reform Law in 1988, the Chicago school reform community has evolved through the ongoing campaign to defend and improve the Chicago School Reform Law by parent, community, school reform, and business groups. Key elements of the reform infrastructure have persisted and have shaped the strategies and campaigns to promote local school authority and accountability. Major groups organizing and advocating for school reform include community organizations, Local School Councils, citywide reform organizations, organizing assistance and support groups. See the categories of groups and examples in the chart "Education Reform Organizations in Chicago" in the Appendix.

The Foundations. Chicago foundations made a major commitment to support Chicago School Reform once the 1988 law was passed and several gave major support to the campaign to pass the law. Key foundations, including the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and the Joyce Foundation, made an unprecedented commitment to fund public school reform for ten years, 1990-

2000. The MacArthur Foundation pledged $10 million for 10 years. Their funding created an infrastructure of over 100 university-based, social service, and non-profit organizations that provided direct assistance to schools through staff development, curriculum development, and community services. The Chicago Renewal Society, a non-denominational Protestant social action umbrella organization that had founded *The Chicago Reporter* magazine in the 1970's to document racial inequities in the metropolitan area, founded *Catalyst* magazine to report monthly on developments in Chicago school reform.

In 1995, school reform activists shaped the plan for the Chicago Annenberg Challenge to enhance the capacity of local schools to lead their improvement efforts. With a $5 million budget for five years, the Chicago Annenberg Challenge (CAC) was set up as an independent organization, separate from the Board of Education. The CAC was run by an 8-member board and advised by a larger body of nearly 25 school reform participants. To participate, schools joined networks of 3-10 schools and paired with an external partner, an organization capable of providing staff, curriculum, and/or leadership development in a wide range of areas. The CAC extended its funding for a final sixth year, 2000-2001. During the six years, over 250 schools and 75 external partners collaborated to increase student achievement; create more personal and challenging school climates; develop the professional capacity and leadership of teachers and principals; and increase parent, community, and LSC involvement and leadership in the daily life of schools.

The Chicago Teachers Union. When the Chicago School Reform Law was passed in 1988, the leadership of the CTU was divided on how to respond to the reform. If they opposed it outright, they would appear to be against improving schools for children. If they favored it, they could be opening schools up to community control and education decision-making by non-professionals. The CTU had largely been a "bread and butter" union in the tradition of the craft unions of the Chicago Federation of Labor, negotiating only for wages and working conditions. Intellectual leadership on educational reform was largely absent, unlike some of the other urban affiliates of the American Federation of Teachers. After two years, with prodding from their national leadership in the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), and encouragement from foundations, the CTU created the Quest Center, staffed by five professional persons, to provide support to teachers in learning new teaching methods, including how to work with LSCs and parents.

Over the years, the Quest Center has encouraged teachers to learn more innovative, interactive, research-based methods of teaching. The Center has partnered with reform groups in some initiatives, such as the citywide independent student reading program, Links-to-Literacy. However, they have not opposed the educational policies of the Mayor's education team, like high stakes testing, retention, "back to basics" test drill curriculum, or the accountability program of the Vallas administration, which gives the Central Board the right to close schools, re-engineer them, transfer and fire staff, and dismantle LSCs.

Another element of Mayor Daley's new relationship to CPS beginning in 1995 was to actively negotiate with the CTU to gain "labor peace." The union obtained a three-year contract, but gave up bargaining over working conditions. While a minority of teachers opposed the contract as a "sellout," the prospect of a guaranteed opening of the school year with no strikes or collective bargaining hassles proved to be popular enough to quiet large-scale opposition by union members.

The Chicago Principals Association (CPA). The Chicago Principals Association (currently the Chicago Principals and Administrators Association or CPAA) filed a lawsuit to overthrow the Chicago School Reform Law on the grounds that the law deprived principals of their property right to tenure. The court ruled against them, denying that they were entitled to any such property right. When the CPAA appealed the decision, the court ruled the School Reform Act unconstitutional on one-man, one-vote grounds. With the aggressive legal and lobbying initiative of school reform groups, the law was amended and passed.

Although nearly 82% all of the CPS principals were retained by their LSC in the first two years of the law's operation, by 1998 there was an 80% turnover in principals. The nature of the principal's position was so changed by the Reform Law that a substantial portion of principals and potential principals realized that collaborating with parents, community, and staff was beneficial. Others sought to manipulate and control LSCs, or preferred to leave. Since the Mayor was given new authority in 1995, his team has sought to make principals more directly responsive to top-down authority and to drive a wedge between principals and LSCs.

III. COMMUNITY ORGANIZING IN CHICAGO: PAST AND PRESENT

Chicago was the historic center of the development of a wave of community organizing that began in the 1930's when Saul Alinsky established the Back of the Yards Council, in a packinghouse industry neighborhood. Alinsky later established the Industrial Areas Foundation, with a "reveille for radicals," to train organizers to build community organizations across the city and the country. Imbued with a philosophy that ordinary neighborhood citizens could learn to organize successful campaigns to win concrete improvements from public officials, banks, and corporations for their neighborhood, neighborhood organizations grew. In the Back of the Yards neighborhood, Alinsky worked deliberately to create a countervailing pressure to the successful industrial union, the United Packinghouse Workers, organized by the Communist Party. The CP organized with an explicit "black and white unite" strategy that might, at the neighborhood level, have created very different organizations.

As a legacy of Alinsky's organizing, Chicago has been home to several organizer training groups and a stable structure of individual neighborhood organizations. The organizer training groups have included the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), the Midwest Academy (a 1970's offshoot of IAF), the Gamaliel Foundation, and the National Training and Information Center (NTIC), (also founded by former IAF organizers).[18] Typically in a Chicago neighborhood there is a lead community organization, with smaller ones rising and falling. Over time these organizations have developed working relationships with elected officials, businesses, churches, and service agencies. The community-based organizations tend not to unite across city neighborhoods, but reflect the ethnic and racial characteristics of their particular neighborhood. Community organizations have become part of the accepted social compact in the city of Chicago; foundations support community organizations as the legitimate community voice, and elected officials often agree to work with them. They are typically multiple issue organizations and tend to apply the same organizing tactics and strategy to different issues, such as bank redlining, economic development, improved city services, affordable housing, and more police protection to reduce crime.

African-American Organizing. In predominantly African-American neighborhoods on the South and West Side, community organizations, civil rights organizations, churches, service agencies and settlement houses have a long history of organizing around school issues. Since the early civil rights protests of the 1950's, segregation of black students into overcrowded and inadequate facilities created frequent sparks and flash fires. Until the 1980's, all Chicago school superintendents and top officials were white, and patterns of racial discrimination became targets for public protest.

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[18] For a discussion of community organization "training intermediaries," see Gary Delgado (1994). *Beyond the Politics of Place. New Directions in Community Organizing in the 1990's*. Oakland, CA: Applied Research Center., pp. 39-43.

After many struggles over selecting a principal who would be responsive to parent and community concerns, Chicagoans were able to get a state law passed in 1971 that required the creation of a Principal Selection Committee at any CPS school when a principalship became vacant. That committee of parent and community residents was to be representative of the make-up of the student body and had the power to interview principal candidates and recommend to the school superintendent their three top choices for principal. While the superintendent was under no legal obligation to follow the recommendations, such committees gained de facto influence at schools where the parents and community pressed public officials on school and other community issues. This law set a precedent for the principal evaluation and selection powers of the Local School Council in the 1988 School Reform Law.

Latino Organizing. Latino parents in the Chicago Public Schools come from many other countries all through Central and South America, with a small middle class and a much larger working class, who continue to be active in their local schools and on Local School Councils, as well as on certain citywide issues. Latinos live in several predominantly Mexican and Puerto Rican communities, mixed with smaller influxes of residents from Central and South American countries.

In the 1960's Latinos organized around many issues and in different kinds of organizations. The United Neighborhood Organization (UNO) was organized by IAF organizers and provided the leadership for a coalition of groups that included community organizations, churches, constituencies of the Independent Political Organization (an organization asserting independence of the Democratic Party machine), and community-based service organizations in predominantly Mexican neighborhoods in Pilsen and Little Village. UNO was church-based and used Alinsky-style organizing tactics to try to win reforms from the city. UNO became a training ground for organizers, neighborhood leaders, splinter organizations, and, most recently, elected officials, as the growing Latino population of the city made Latinos a political force that the Democratic Party wanted to bring into its fold. Rather than fight their way in, UNO preferred to collaborate with City Hall on reforms and was pleased when Daniel Solis, UNO executive director for ten years, was appointed alderman by Mayor Daley in the 25th ward in 1996; he was elected alderman in 1998.

At the same time, a loose coalition of Latino social, educational, and political organizations sharing a neighborhood-empowerment ideology, provided another significant constituency for the organizing movement in the Latino community. They organized grassroots neighbors and activists rather than church parishes, and sought confrontation rather than collaboration with the Democratic Party and city institutions. Including Un Barrio Major, Casa Aztlan, and Instituto del Progresso Latino, the coalition also had ties to the labor movement through Rudy Lozano, an independent labor organizer, who was assassinated at his kitchen table while leading an organizing drive at a taco factory. Planning to replace the 25th and 22nd aldermen with independent Latinos, they were ultimately successful with their strategy in electing the first independent Latino aldermen, Juan Solis in the 22nd Ward (Pilsen), and Jesus Garcia in the 25th Ward (Little Village). Garcia was elected ward committeeman in

1984 and alderman in 1986. Juan Solis was elected state representative in 1984 and alderman in 1986.

UNO participated in the citywide school reform movement, working with Parents United for Responsible Education (PURE) and Organization of the Northeast (ONE), a satellite of UNO on the Northwest Side in a multi-cultural port-of-entry neighborhood. But UNO has focused on predominantly local school efforts in Latino neighborhoods in recent years. UNO teaches a parent training component on child development that they deliver in schools, working largely with monolingual parents through the school bilingual councils. They have also supported schools in their facilities and construction campaigns.

In predominantly Puerto Rican neighborhoods, support for school reform came from a spectrum of groups ranging from the radical left, independentistas calling for the independence of Puerto Rico from the US; the Ruiz Belvis Cultural Center, associated with the Puerto Rican Socialist Party; Universidad Popular, an independent adult learning center grounded in a pedagogy of liberation; to more established institutions like Association House, a multi-service organization and largest employer of Latinos in the city. Initially, some left groups were suspicious of the LSCs as "part of the system," but later worked to support and elect members to the LSC as an exercise of local democracy. In one highly publicized instance, the Central Office targeted the LSC of a high school in a Puerto Rican community with ostensible ties to the Puerto Rican independence movement, as a cover for investigating and planning to reduce Chapter 1 discretionary funding to all LSCs. Citywide reform organizations intervened and negotiated effectively with the elected state officials in charge of the investigation to prevent the loss of Chapter 1 funds.

Asian and Other Recent Immigrant Organizing. The Asian neighborhoods of the city whose residents come from the Far East, with the exception of the Chinese neighborhoods, are relatively new, low-income, and without significant political force. Their community organizations are small and understaffed, dealing with the multiple issues of immigration, housing, learning English and job skills, jobs, domestic violence, and healthcare. Organizing for sustained improvement in local schools has not yet risen to the top of their priority goals. Chinatown has long-established internal neighborhood organization and social service agencies. The Chinese-American Service League in Chinatown was active early in the school reform movement around local schools, but has not remained active. Many neighborhoods on the North and Southwest Sides of the city are multi-national, and local community organizations may embrace many languages and nationalities, including East Asian, Arab, Latino, and Eastern European. These organizations tend to become more involved in organizing for school reform, as their members include businesses, churches, and social service agencies who identify safe and effective schools as a stabilizing force for neighborhood development.

The intensely local focus of the individual community organizations have typically kept them from forming stable citywide coalitions, although such citywide coalitions have emerged around special issues from times to time, as in the most recent reappearance of the Industrial Areas Foundation in Chicago (IAF). In the mid-90's, the IAF returned at the invitation of Roman Catholic Cardinal Joseph Bernardin, the black Baptist community, Jewish community leaders, and unions. The IAF hired experienced IAF organizers and built relationships over three years among urban and suburban congregations and organizations to organize the United Power for Action and Justice, a coalition of 10,000 religious, labor, and civic activists. They have held one mass meeting, organized two organizing projects — Southwest Organizing Project and the Northwest Organizing Project in a poor African-American neighborhood on the West Side — and developed strategy committees to identify issues and strategies. The two key issues that have emerged from strategy committees are health care for uninsured people and affordable housing, but education is not a key IAF focus.

Community organizations have developed many different kinds of relationships with the LSCs in their area, just as LSCs have developed differing relationships with their local community organizations. Community organizations have evolved their own perspectives on the need or desirability for a community organization to work inside the schools to help improve the quality of education on a day-to-day basis, whose role it is to monitor and evaluate school improvement progress, and how education organizing relates to working on other community issues. The next section of this report discusses the relationships among community organizations, LSCs, and citywide school reform organizations in working for school reform in Chicago.

IV. WHO IS ORGANIZING FOR SCHOOL REFORM IN CHICAGO?

In surveying the extensive list of community organizations doing school reform in Chicago, Designs for Change compiled a list of nearly 35 organizations that were involved in some form of education organizing over the past decade. We asked if they met the test of the Hazen Mapping Project's definition of community organizing:

1) A base of parents, youth, and/or neighborhood residents who engage in collective action to address issues related to poor performance and inequities in local public schools and whose vision includes excellent and equitable public schools for all children.
2) A focus on winning concrete changes in school policy and practice using a variety of strategies including, but not limited to, mobilization, direct action, negotiation, training, and working in coalition.
3) A structure that supports and encourages democratic decision-making by group members in all aspects of the organization including decisions about issues, strategies, tactics, and vision.
4) A process for engaging in ongoing recruitment of new members and the development of leadership from within the membership base.
5) A commitment to building a strong and lasting organization dedicated to altering the power relations that lead to failing schools in low and moderate income neighborhoods and communities of color.

We also asked if the organizations had demonstrated an organizing capacity over the past fifteen years, the period in which Chicago organizing for school reform coalesced around restructuring the Chicago Public Schools to create and maintain local school authority in parent-majority Local School Councils. These probes narrowed the list to 19 organizations that have been actively organizing for school reform during the past fifteen years up to the present time, have maintained a focus on improving local schools, and have joined coalitions and campaigns to impact school system policy at any of several other levels — including the CPS administrative Regional Offices, the CPS Central Office, the School Board, the School Facilities Commission, the State Legislature, state and federal courts, and the Office of Civil Rights of the United States Department of Education. See Appendix Table 1. Chicago Organization Profiles.

For this report, DFC staff completed the telephone survey of the executive director or lead organizer (the title ACORN uses for their lead staff person) of the 19 groups. We then chose the 5 groups with a consistent history of organizing their constituency, defining and pressing for local and system changes, and bringing about changes that they targeted. The organizations selected for a focus group format and interviews were ACORN Chicago, Bethel New Life/COR, Blocks Together, Rogers Park

Community Action Network, and Schools First.[19] We interviewed the executive directors in person to explore issues raised in the survey and gather more data about their work. We then carried out a focus group with the five directors and the lead organizer of the most cohesive student organizing group we surveyed, Generation Y.[20]

After we completed the interview, the data showed that Chicago had developed a school reform movement in the past 15 years that includes three groups that do community organizing for school reform:

- Community organizations,
- School reform organizations that organized citywide constituencies, and
- Local School Councils.

A fourth group includes groups that do parent and community organizing for school reform, but are primarily support organizations that provide leadership development and training, specialized assistance, and long-term political strategy to the other three groups.[21] Since the 1988 Chicago School Reform Law was passed, all of these groups have had legal rights to access the schools. They can participate in LSC elections, become LSC members, and exercise the key decision-making powers of hiring the principal, determining the School Improvement Plan, and allocating discretionary budget funds.

Unlike other American urban districts, Chicago community organizations and neighborhood residents are legally entitled to make local school policy by working through the Local School Council. This dynamic has engaged all the organizations in a complex learning process of working to improve both local schools and the system, to change policies and practices, and both demand and provide accountability for the progress of schools. This process has created a body of experience in Chicago about the duality of working inside the school as an advocate for change and accountability and a partner with staff, as well as outside the school organizing and advocating for school improvements. Not only do community organizations determine issues around which to organize, but they strategize how to win changes at the local, system, state, and even national level. This section of the report discusses the organizational characteristics of the 19 organizations and highlights the work of community organizations. Section V. focuses on the work of Local School and the citywide school reform organizations in organizing for school reform.

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[19] Designs for Change meets the criteria for the focus group organizations, but as the research organization, took the role of convener of the group. DFC works closely with Schools First, an organization that represents a good segment of DFC's constituency organizing.

[20] The focus group met again twice to give feedback on the draft version of this report. Fran Tobin, executive director of Rogers Park Community Action Network, was the only group leader unable to attend, as he had resigned to travel and study community organizing in the U.S. and abroad.

[21] The citywide school reform organizations and key support organizations can act like the "community organizing training intermediaries" mentioned in Section III, but several also organize their own constituencies, for example PURE organizes parents and teachers citywide.

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Organization and Structure

Of the 19 groups, most identify themselves both as membership organizations and multi-issue community-based organizations. Six identified themselves as service providers, and only 1 as a faith-based organization (Bethel/COR). The groups are about evenly divided between those who also describe themselves as advocacy groups and those who don't.

Fourteen see their primary work as organizing; only three (Association House, Beverly Area Planning Association, and Parents United for Responsible Education) define their work as primarily service. (Interview probes suggest that PURE understood "service" to include working with individual parents and with Local School Councils to solve problems, and this usually becomes advocacy.) Since groups could choose more than one focus, there were overlapping categories; sixteen organizations also identified leadership development. Because many are multi-issue organizations, twelve identified school reform as a major focus; the groups that did not identify school reform as a major focus included Bethel/COR, Blocks Together, Chicago ACORN, Generation Y, Northwest Neighborhood Federation, Organization of the Northeast (ONE), and Rogers Park Community Action Network. However, 11 groups did identify parent organizing as a major focus — Bethel/COR, Blocks Together, Brighton Park Neighborhood Council, COFI, Hope Center, Logan Square Neighborhood Associations, the Leadership Coop, ONE, PURE, Schools First, and West Town Leadership United. Ten of the organizations included youth organizing, while only three defined youth services.

Sixteen of the groups were multi-issue organizations. Three groups were single-issue, focusing solely on education (Designs for Change, PURE, and Schools First). At least six organizations work citywide (Chicago School Leadership Development Council, COFI, Designs for Change, Neighborhood Capitol Budget Group, PURE, and Schools First). Of the community-based organizations, one organizes in several neighborhoods (ACORN organizes in three neighborhoods); and twelve identified specific neighborhood constituencies (Association House, Bethel New Life/COR, BAPA, Blocks Together, Brighton Park Neighborhood Council, Hope Center, Generation Y, Logan Square Neighborhood Association, Northwest Neighborhood Federation, Organization of the Northeast, Rogers Park Community Action Network, and West Town Leadership United). The map locates the offices of the organizations and indicates the extent of their organizing areas. Several organizations have Loop offices, but their field organizing staff work constantly citywide or in several neighborhoods.

Mission and Goals

See Table 2 in the Appendix for the mission and goals of the organizations.

National Organizational Affiliations

Nine organizations are affiliates or members of national organizations. Association House collaborates with the Midwest network of the National Council of La Raza, a national Latino advocacy group that works reform in education, immigration, youth and other issues. Chicago

ACORN is one of 35 ACORN city-based organizations affiliated with the national organization. National ACORN staff and local leaders are in discussion about what a national education campaign should be. Chicago ACORN advocates a national emphasis on campaigns for quality teachers, class size reduction, and development of small schools, including charter schools.

Blocks Together, Brighton Park, and Northwest Neighborhood Federation are affiliated with National Training and Information Center (NTIC) and National People's Action (NPA). NTIC provides technical assistance and support to affiliated community organizations and brings them together around common issues. Their current campaign focuses on getting increased federal funding for school construction and helping local organizations fight for improved education facilities funding and construction. National People's Action (NPA) is a coalition of over 300 community organizations from 38 states. NPA holds a once-a-year event in the spring, convened by NTIC, that brings members and affiliates to Washington, D.C. for workshops and direct actions, with sit-ins and demonstrations at federal government offices. Organization of the Northeast (ONE) commented on the yearly NPA action, "We send people to the national conference in Washington as a learning activity — they storm government offices to make demands — it's a fine activity to be a part of." Bethel /COR also organizes people for NPA actions.

Generation Y has both local and national ties. They are part of the Southwest Youth Collaborative, a multi-issue community organization that provides services for the development of youth and families. Generation Y is a member of ERASE (Expose Racism and Advance School Excellence), a national alliance of community organizations and policy organizations working for racial justice in public education. Generation Y is also affiliated on the national level with the Center for Third World Organizing (CTWO). CTWO focuses on developing organizers in communities of color to build a movement for racial justice. They provide Generation Y with training and technical assistance, hosting at least one Community Action Training at the Southwest Youth Collaborative, as an intensive introduction to grassroots community organizing, each year. West Town Leadership United is affiliated with the National Organizing Alliance (NOA); all individual staff are members. NOA provides staff training and research support.

Income/Race/Ethnicity

The groups serve diverse racial and ethnic constituencies, reflecting the demographic characteristics of Chicago public school students and their neighborhood residents. Nine groups say that they work with only low-income people; six with working class and one with a combination of the two. Two groups work with a combination of low and middle income (Hope Center and PURE) and BAPA describes its constituency as middle income. African-Americans and Latinos comprise the main racial/ethnic groups that are the focus of the seventeen groups' organizing. Five community organizations identified their Caucasian constituency as 20% or more (BAPA, Brighton Park, Logan Square, ONE and Rogers Park), reflecting the more diverse neighborhoods they represent. Five community organizations identified their Caucasian constituency as 20% or more (BAPA, Brighton

Park, Logan Square, ONE and Rogers Park), reflecting the more diverse neighborhoods they represent. Four organizations organize a constituency that is between 10 and 20% Caucasian (Blocks Together, Designs for Change, Northwest Neighborhood Federation, and Schools First), and ten organize in communities in which 10% or less of their constituency is Caucasian (Association House, Bethel/COR, ACORN, COFI, Hope Center, the Leadership Coop, Neighborhood Capitol Budget Group, PURE, and West Town). Seven organizations included Asian-Americans in their constituency; except for ONE at 14%, reflecting its neighborhood, and the Coop at 10%, the others were all at or under 5%. The fact that most groups work with low-income and working class people, and that only three groups identified their constituency as including middle income is consistent with the demographics of the Chicago Public Schools, as summarized in the Table 3. below.

TABLE 3. Racial and Ethnic Constituencies Served by Chicago Organizations

Organization	African-American	Asian	Caucasian	Latino
Association House	20%			80%
Bethel/COR	97%			3%
Beverly Area Planning Association	39%	3% other	58%	
Blocks Together	22%	2% other	12%	64%
Brighton Park	5%	5%	20%	70%
Chicago ACORN	75%			25%
Chicago Leadership Coop	50%	10%	10%	30%
COFI	5%		5%	70%
Designs for Change	40%	2% +2% Native American + 1% other	15%	40%
Generation Y	40%	5% (Arab American)	5%	50%
Hope Center	100%			
Logan Square	8%		22%	70%
Neighborhood Capitol Budget Group	60%		10%	30%
Northwest Neighborhood Federation	2%		18% (10% Polish immigrants)	80%
ONE	30%	14% + 1% other	25%	30%
PURE	55%	$5 + 1% other	10%	30%
RPCAN	50%	5%	20%	25%

Schools First	54%	3% + 1% other	11%	31%
West Town	5%	10%	5%	80%
CPS Students 2000-2001	**52.3%**	**3.2% + 0.2% Native American**	**9.9%**	**34.4%**
Chicago Population (1995)	**38%**	**4% other**	**38%**	**20%**

Youth Organizing

Generation Y is the only group that focuses exclusively on organizing a constituency of youth; in that organization, youth hold leadership positions and determine organizing campaigns. Paid part-time youth organizers on staff recruit students, and they have focused on four neighborhood high schools on the Southwest Side. Table 4. summarizes the organizations that described some involvement with youth.

TABLE 4. The Nature of Youth Involvement at Chicago Organizations

Organization	**Nature of Youth Involvement**
Association House	Youth are advisors and advocates on issues pertaining to youth, such as education, police brutality, and anti-gang initiatives. There are two councils in the schools – a student council and an advisory council for the Quantum Project – which allow the youth members to make recommendations for events and make decisions on student issues.
Bethel/COR	Youth workers provide educational and recreation youth services, bring youth to Board of Education meetings. Hired five youth/Links workers to do outreach to younger people (3-25) in the community.
Blocks Together	A youth council chooses issues to work on, these have focused mostly on safety and anti-drug work in the community. Youth members also work on issues with adults when their interests are the same, i.e., for the school facilities campaign youth spoke to officials and the press. One youth member serves on the Board of Directors.
Brighton Park	Youth are active and integral members, serve on the Board of Directors, have a strong Youth Council whose Steering Committee of 30-40 youth meets each week to identify issues of interest/concern. Youth also attend trainings, run meetings, and talk with the press.
Chicago ACORN	Youth are active members, attend meetings and demonstrations, and participate in decision-making. Youth interests are included and help decide focus of campaigns. For example, instead of focusing a campaign on police brutality, ACORN chose to focus on police accountability, a strategy which was inclusive of the youth concerns.
COFI	Training helps youth develop a vision of their community, family, school, and lives.
Generation Y	Youth provide leadership through deciding what issues to pursue and campaigns to organize. They have been involved in research around discipline: interviewing students, meeting with school personnel, and writing FOIA requests. Some of the youth are part-time paid staff members: recruiting in their high school, running training workshops,

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	and facilitating workshops.
Hope Center	Youth hold no decision-making roles, participate in peer mentorship and workshops which create opportunities for self-determination.
Logan Square	Youth committee meets weekly to determine their concerns and resolutions, they have a vote on the Executive Board, and present their resolutions to LSNA committees and the organization, as needed.
Northwest Neighborhood Federation	Youth are active participants: speak at hearings, define issues, conduct research, organize student leaders, and present organizing trainings. Currently they have no representation on the NNF Board, but this is expected to change at their Fall 2001 Convention.
West Town	Peer mentors work in elementary schools, beginning to provide youth leadership development

These and additional groups said they brought youth to Board of Education meetings or larger meetings in the community dealing with school issues.

Membership

All these organizations emphasize the importance of increasing their base to build power, as well as developing the leadership skills of their members. Most of these organizations work on multiple issues, so their total membership and core leadership is larger than the specific group active on education. The following data describes only membership in their education organizing.

- Eight groups identified 50 or less people as their core of active members, eight reported 60 to 100, two reported over 100, and Generation Y identified 15 to 20 students as their core leaders.
- Planning meetings on average were attended by 20 or fewer members in eight of the organizations, from 20 to 30 by another eight, and over 30 by three.
- Ten of the organizations were able to mobilize 25 to 100 people for their largest educational related meeting, while another nine organized from 100 up to 650.
- As expected, because most groups focus on organizing adults, only five groups had over 30 youth at their largest education-related meetings.

How long have the groups been involved in education organizing? The groups fall into three categories: organizing for education reform for ten or more years, organizing for education reform for ten years (1990-2000)[22] and organizations that began education organizing in 1995 or later. Seven organizations have been doing education reform for more than ten years. Of the seven, three are single-issue education groups, BAPA, Designs for Change, and PURE. The other four organizations that have been working in education for more than ten years are community organizations, and three began working to improve local schools before the school reform movement began (Association House, Bethel New Life/COR, and Logan Square Neighborhood Association). Of those three, only Association House was part of the citywide reform movement to pass the Chicago School Reform Law. Bethel, LSNA, and the fourth group, Chicago ACORN, became involved with LSCs soon after the law created them.

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[22] The surveys were conducted in the year 2000, but all the organizations studied for this report have continued their work into 2001.

Three more groups defined viable organizing opportunities on school issues by the early 1990's. Schools First (1991) grew out of an earlier parent group that DFC had organized in the mid-1980's, Chicago Schoolwatch. Staff from UNO, the Latino neighborhood organization, organized Organization of the Northeast (ONE) in a Latino/multi-ethnic neighborhood on the North Side (1990). Rogers Park Community Action Network began "sporadic" organizing around education work in 1990, and since 1994 has worked more consistently, especially around LSC elections and around school facilities, expansion, and overcrowding issues. ONE and RPCAN are multi-issue community organizations for whom education is one among several priority issues, which they choose to staff at different levels at different times.

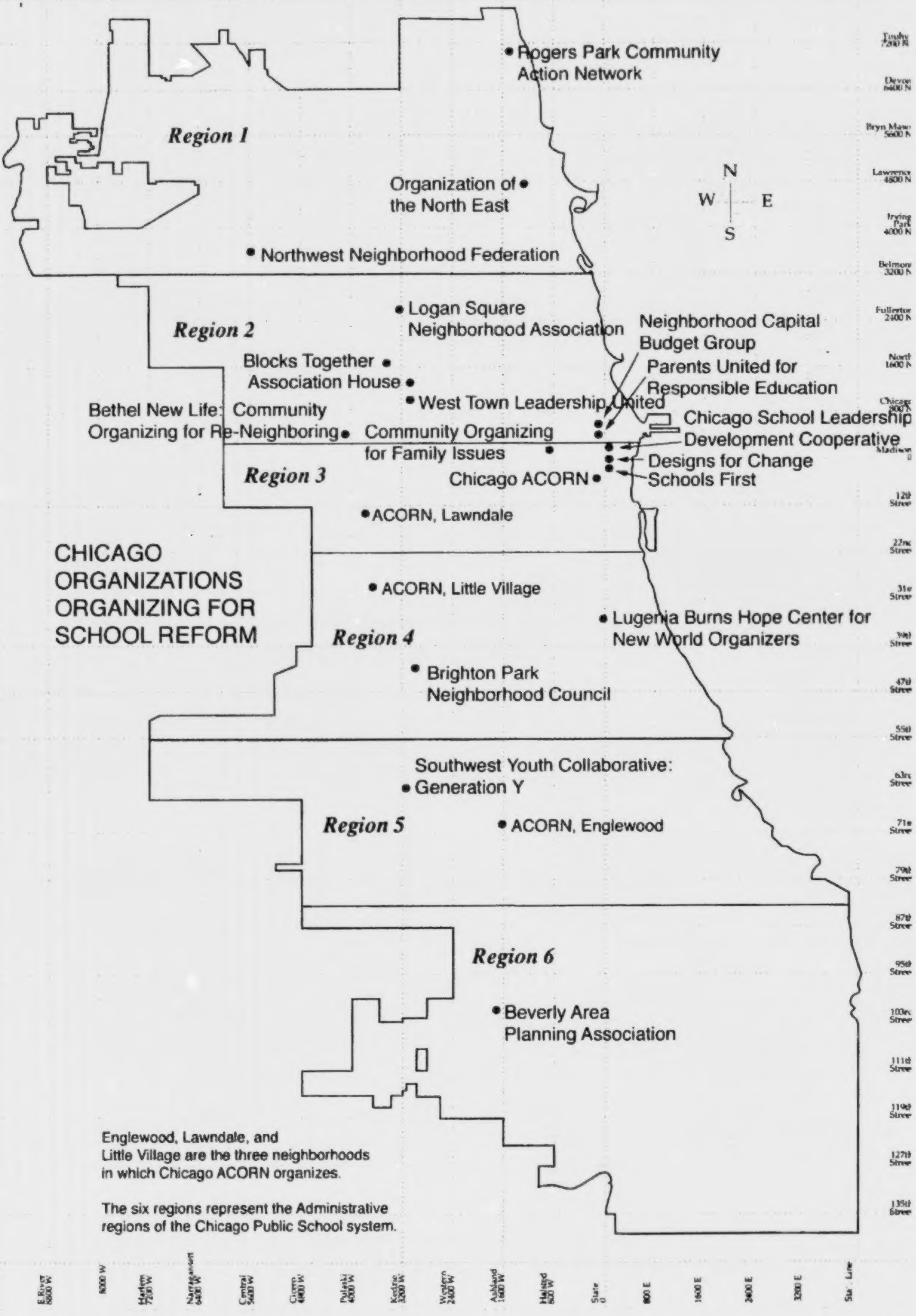
Of the nine organizations that began to organize around education in 1995 or later, six are neighborhood community organizations and three have a citywide focus. The six community groups include Blocks Together, organizing in North Side predominantly Latino communities; Brighton Park, on the Near South Side; Generation Y, on the Southwest Side; Hope Center, organizing in the historical Black South Side neighborhood, Bronzeville; Northwest Neighborhood Federation, organizing in North West Side predominantly Latino communities; and West Town Leadership United, also organizing in North Side predominantly Latino communities.

Budget, Funding, and Staff

Most organizations rely on foundation grants for support, grants for education work comprise only a small part of their budgets. They have full-time organizers, and just a few have staff who work solely on education issues. A comparison of organizational budgets, funding sources, and staffing patterns presents a varied picture. (See Table 5. Chicago Organizations' Budget, Funding Sources, and Staff Table in the Appendix.)

For most of these organizations, over 50% of their funds were from foundations. For almost half, foundation support amounted to 80 to 100% of their total funding. Eight organizations received 30% or less of their funds from private corporations. Eight of the ten organizations receiving funds from membership dues received 20% or less of their funding from that source. Private donors contributed to eight organizations, supporting 20% or less of the organizations' budgets. Eleven organizations held events to raise funds. Eight received government (federal, city, or state) funding, and this was roughly 30% or less of their annual budgets.

Looking at the groups annual budgets, two relied on less than $100,000 (Generation Y and RPCAN), one was in the $100,000 to $249,000 range (NCBG), eleven were in the $250,000 to $500,000 range (Bethel/COR, BAPA, Blocks Together, Brighton Park, COFI, Coop, Hope Center, Northwest Neighborhood, ONE, PURE, and West Town), and the above $500,000 budgets included Association House, Chicago ACORN, Designs for Change, and Logan Square Neighborhood Association. Schools First did not have an independent budget; they work as a volunteer organization and have no paid staff, since they collaborate with Designs for Change staff for assistance with organizing and training. Few of the organizations had staff that worked only on education issues, Designs for Change and PURE are exceptions. Blocks Together has a full-time education organizer. Neighborhood Capitol Budget Group has a full-time lead organizer and a second full-time organizer on their schools initiative, which accounts for nearly half the work of the organization. In the other community organizations, the director and staff members work part-time on education, though several indicated they would like to have one or more full-time education organizers.



CHICAGO ORGANIZATIONS ORGANIZING FOR SCHOOL REFORM

Englewood, Lawndale, and Little Village are the three neighborhoods in which Chicago ACORN organizes.

The six regions represent the Administrative regions of the Chicago Public School system.

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V. LOCAL SCHOOL COUNCILS AND CITYWIDE SCHOOL REFORM ORGANIZATIONS

Local School Councils

The Local School Councils have emerged as an independent organizing group for school reform in Chicago. As illustrated in the Introduction story about the Sullivan Local School Council organizing for a new building, LSC leaders had learned organizing skills in other community contexts and put them to work on behalf of their school. Like Sullivan, many LSCs work in neighborhoods that lack strong community organizations.

Research shows that over half of the LSCs have been able to carry out their responsibilities; to engage support from the principal, staff, parents and community; and to make improvement in student achievement. These councils maintain a full membership, hold regular monthly meetings, obtain a quorum at each meeting, have an agenda, and debate policy decisions before voting. Among those, a portion have become particularly strong advocates against Central Office interference in their authority, as in selecting their principal, and advocates for citywide policy changes, such as LSCs obtaining a larger share of State Chapter 1 funds or creating community center schools open beyond the 9 AM - 3 PM school day. Another quarter to third of the LSCs share some of these characteristics, but also have difficulty and would benefit from more training and support. They tend to be more compliant with the leadership of their principal. Ten to 15 percent have serious problems that may include irregular attendance and persistent conflict.

Council members tend to be concerned parents and community residents who had been active in their churches, block clubs, neighborhood organizations, campaigns, or unions, and were familiar with taking responsibility to improve their community. LSCs organize their member constituents – parents, community members, teachers – for the biannual elections; once elected they organize trainings to learn about carrying out their major powers. They work to build support for writing School Improvement Plan goals and activities that will improve student achievement at their school and to allocate the discretionary funds that will enable key activities.
They organize to get people out for regular meetings, for special meetings when crises arise, and for longer campaigns.

> We were due $12 million to upgrade the vocational shops, but it wasn't until the LSC organized a campaign to pressure the Board that we got the funds released. Eight of our LSC members and students went to Board meetings to testify and we got local media coverage. Four weeks later the money came.
> —Leroy Epps, Chicago Vocational High School Local School Council

Citywide School Reform Organizations

Of the 19 organizations surveyed, for example, 3 — Chicago School Leadership Development Cooperative (Leadership Coop), Community Organizing and Family Issues (COFI), and the Neighborhood Capitol Budget Group (NCBG) — employ their own education organizers to work directly with community organizations and Local School Councils, parents, and community members. These organizations may also organize new groups for school reform, including neighborhood groups, LSC candidates and members, and LSC supporters.

- Since 1988 Neighborhood Capital Budget Group (NCBG) had been working on city budget issues in areas such as housing, transportation, and libraries. As of 1994 NCBG began to dedicate staff positions and place a priority on becoming a resource to Local School Councils and reform and community organizations on budget and capital investment to improve school facilities.
- Community Organizing and Family Issues (COFI) began in 1995 to provide parent leadership development education using a four-step model. They contracted with individual community organizations (including Logan Square Neighborhood Association, West Town Leadership United, and Organization of the Northeast) for two-year periods to educate organization staff and their constituency in the process of becoming community leaders through the schools.
- In 1998, the Chicago School Development Leadership Coop was formed to bring diverse community organizations, LSCs, and networks of neighborhood activists together to obtain more support for LSC elections and LSC training, and to disseminate information on LSC issues and the school reform work of Coop member groups.

Three other citywide organizations explicitly organize a citywide constituency to work on common issues facing all LSCs and schools in the system. They are

- Parents United for Responsible Education (PURE), who organize parents and teachers and work with LSCs to solve problems.
- Designs for Change (DFC), who organizes LSC members and parent. ommunity and teacher supporters to work on system policy changes and to protect LSC rights as established by the 1988 law.
- Schools First (SF), who organizes LSC members both to collaborate on solving common problems and to advocate for local school autonomy and prevent legal attacks on the 1988 law.

> We are fighting to retain local control over curriculum. We inform schools of their right under state law to set their curriculum and dispute the Board of Education's attempts to change that. We outline what the law says. People do not always realize that that is part of their responsibility as an LSC.
> — Eric Outten, Schools First

All three groups work in coalition together and with community and other citywide groups.

Relationships Among Community Organizations, LSCs, and Citywide Reform Organizations

Community organizations and LSCs can cooperate or compete as the voice of a neighborhood. Organizations take different stances toward working with the LSCs —steady or intermittent; upfront or behind the scenes during elections; working with school personnel or with the LSC to bring about change. Tensions can exist between LSCs and community organizations as they organize in the same neighborhood. Who speaks for the community, the LSC or the community organization? ACORN and Blocks Together speak of "holding the LSCs accountable to the community," yet LSCs may consider community groups to be more concerned with building their base than school improvement. Council members have asked, "Where were you when we were selecting a principal and fending off Central Office interference?" Community organizations may differ on the need for their staff to work inside the schools to help improve the quality of education on a day-to-day basis, the need to monitor and evaluate school improvement progress, as well as how education organizing relates to working on other community issues. Multi-issue community organizations can be pulled in many directions at the same time.

> It's not clear how the other campaigns around housing and jobs will politically interact - alliances could be different, targets are potentially in different roles on different issues. The alderman on development issues is a target for control over zoning and access to city funds. On schools he has no direct control, so he should be a strong advocate for fighting for more resources. We don't know yet.
> — Fran Tobin, Rogers Park Community Action Network.

Community organizations may not be able to focus on schools consistently because they also have an agenda determined by community priorities. They have limited resources and must prioritize. For example, on the South Side, as Chicago Housing Authority high rises are being torn down, housing is disappearing. Community groups there are concerned with monitoring the many city promises of aid to the displaced tenants and the mix of new housing that will be built.

Receiving money from the CPS can limit a community organization's freedom to organize publicly in campaigns critical of the CPS, including high stakes testing and retention, the current Chapter 1 allocation formulas, or Board interference with Local School Councils choosing their own principal. Members of those organizations who are active in their Local School Councils and schools have acted independently of the community organization to join citywide campaigns to change system policies and practices and to go to Springfield to lobby.

It has been difficult for the citywide reform organizations and community organizations to collaborate and share their expertise, strategy, and lessons learned. Every organization feels overwhelmed by the size of the job they do, and carving out more time for learning from each other falls to the bottom of the list. Community groups may see citywide groups as coming with a crisis and then object that community groups have not participated in shaping the agenda, i.e., the legislative agenda for the General Assembly in Springfield. The citywide organizations urge community organizations to link their local school issues to larger citywide campaigns for equity in resources, like increased investment in neighborhood high schools and an end to the preferential investment in an increasing number of magnet nigh schools.

VI. WHAT ARE THEIR ORGANIZING ISSUES?

Once the School Reform law had been passed, it was clear that certain issues would be critical to citywide and community organizations building a constituency to work for school reform. Five critical issue areas emerged early over time across the city

1. Effective elections and active Local School Councils
2. Parent and community leadership development
3. School climate and facilities
4. Quality of education
5. Protecting the School Reform Law and changing systemwide policies

Each community organization began with individual issues at different schools, but taken together, most organizations in this study have organized around at least four of these five major issues. The following organizational profiles describe the particular experience of six organizations.

Community Organization Profiles

Chicago ACORN

Denise Dixon is a wife and mother in the working class neighborhood of West Englewood on Chicago's South Side. President of Chicago ACORN for the last year, Denise has been active in numerous issue campaigns. She has two children at O'Toole Elementary School, and another soon to be entering. In 1999, Denise took over the leadership of the fight for a new public library in West Englewood. "Community groups had been calling for a library in our neighborhood for twenty years," said Denise. "Imagine that: not a single library in the neighborhood! The city knew about the need, but didn't feel that they had to do anything about it." Denise and her fellow ACORN members organized a community meeting at O'Toole School that drew 500 parents and community residents. At the meeting, city and library officials made a commitment for a new library down the street from O'Toole.

Since then, Denise ran for and was elected to her local school council, supported the successful fight for a new middle school in her neighborhood, and recently won a commitment for working science labs at the neighborhood high school. She is now leading a campaign for teacher quality. "Being part of ACORN, I learned that parents don't have to accept anything but the best for their children. If we don't create a movement for great schools in our communities, we'll never get them," she added.

Background. The Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN) is a national multi-racial, multi-issue membership organization that believes that people ought to make the decisions that impact their lives. Since 1970 ACORN has been organizing low and moderate income neighborhoods in cities across the country to gain a voice on decisions that affect them, whether winning stop signs near the schools or lending agreements with financial institutions to deliver more than a billion dollars a year in mortgage financing to borrowers who may not have otherwise qualified. Seeing its roots in American populism and the civil rights and labor movements, ACORN holds that a majority of the people should wield a majority of the power, and that they can do so if they are organized.

Chicago ACORN has been organizing in low and moderate income neighborhoods of the city since 1983, with particular attention to the African American neighborhoods of Englewood/West Englewood on the South Side, North Lawndale on the West Side and the Latino Little Village on the near Southwest Side. Their members are 75% African American and 25% Latino. More than 9000 families are members of Chicago ACORN; members meet monthly in their neighborhoods to identify issues to work on, make plans, and take action.

Involvement in Schools. Members of ACORN have always expressed an interest in school-related issues. In the 1980's, parents and residents near Bontemps Elementary School in Englewood organized to win the removal of barrels of toxic chemicals from a warehouse near the school, and eventually won the removal of the warehouse and cleanup of the site. In 1989, in the first local school council elections, ACORN encouraged its members to run for the parent and community positions and elected 87 ACORN members to local school councils. Since the advent of local school councils in Chicago, ACORN has moved more aggressively on environmental campaigns around the schools, as well as classroom education campaigns within the school.

Stopping School Closings. From time to time the Chicago Board of Education would decide that they could save money by tearing down older school buildings that needed expensive repairs in lower income neighborhoods without replacing them, ACORN joined LSC's, parents, and teachers in numerous battles in the early 90's to stop school closings at Dewey Elementary and Lindblom High School, a successful college prep school, in Englewood and Howland Elementary in North Lawndale.

Crime and Abandonment Near the School. ACORN initiated a campaign to win the demolition of a huge abandoned building near Dewey Elementary in 1991. When the city refused, ACORN mounted a citywide campaign to increase the demolition budget for abandoned buildings and create a board-up fund In 1992, ACORN was successful in winning an increase of $7 million to the $2.3 million abandoned building demolition budget, making it possible for dangerous drug and gang hangouts and crime-ridden buildings to come down near schools.

Small Schools. Coming off of the abandoned building campaign and the school closing fights, ACORN had developed good working relationships with a number of principals and LSC's. ACORN offered trainings to its members on education issues in '92-93, and in the spring of '93 joined with the Small Schools Workshop at the University of Illinois at Chicago to hold a forum on small schools in Englewood. Three hundred parents and community residents attended the forum, along with principals and LSC members. As a result, Small Schools Workshop hired an ACORN member who was a CPS high school teacher to work with members to develop schools within schools in ACORN neighborhoods. Later, when charter school legislation passed in Springfield, ACORN members in Little Village applied for and won the right to start a small dual-language charter high school in Little Village.

Grassroots School Improvement Campaign. In 1997, feeling that the organization must impact the quality of education across the board in ACORN neighborhoods, Chicago ACORN initiated a parent and community resident training and action project to create a movement for school change in the community. Working with Small Schools Workshop and Cross City Campaign for Urban School Reform, ACORN provided training to hundreds of parents and community residents in its three target neighborhoods and identified the educational issues that they wanted to work on. In the course of that work, ACORN developed a training curriculum to prepare parents to develop a community constituency on educational issues and to use data to understand how their school was doing. Action campaigns resulted that organized to build the new library in West Englewood, to build the new Anderson Community Academy in Marquette Park, to rehab Lindblom and Harper High Schools in West Englewood (including the working science labs at Harper that Denise Dixon helped to fight for) and to get a CPS commitment, yet to be delivered, for a new high school in Little Village.

Annette Brown started coming to ACORN's parent training and organizing meetings on Chicago's West Side in 1999. Her three children attended Mason Elementary School, and she wanted to help them succeed. "We decided to hold math classes for the parents, because we needed help in understanding some of the homework assignments our children were bringing home," said Annette. "We asked an assistant principal at Mason, Ruth Life, to teach the classes, and for many weeks we learned about math, banking and checking and even a little pre-algebra...One evening at the ACORN meeting I brought up a new concern. 'Okay,' I said. 'So now we're better at helping our kids with the hour and a half of homework they get at night. But what are we doing to improve the five and a half hours of classroom work they do in school?'"

As a result of Annette's question, ACORN's Westside Parents Organization began looking into quality of instruction. They met with the Small Schools Workshop and with the principal at Mason they started running ads for teachers, interviewing applicants and passing the good ones on to the principal for a final decision. Not only did the parents help hire two new teachers for Mason, but they began to see themselves as legitimate players in classroom instructional issues. "Now we're pressuring Chicago Public Schools to fill all of the vacancies in our classrooms, and to provide adequate resources to retain and develop good teachers for our children," said Annette. "What began as parent math classes is now a collaboration between ACORN and CPS on teacher retention and professional development!"

Teacher Recruitment, Retention and Quality. In 2000/2001 the Grassroots School Improvement Campaign started focusing on teachers: without high quality classroom teachers, sustainable school improvement could not be accomplished. In February 2001, Chicago ACORN members marched on the Board of Education with their concerns about teacher vacancies at the city's lower income schools. Though CPS promised to hire 3000 new teachers during the year, it seemed clear that the neighborhood schools in low income neighborhoods might not benefit. A Chicago ACORN study, released in March, showed that teachers at ACORN neighborhood high schools were less likely to have as much education, experience or credentials as teachers in magnet and gifted high schools. ACORN won monthly meetings with CPS officials to look into the problems and propose solutions.

> "Parents, community members count as insiders, as stakeholders in the public arena, raising hell with the Board of Education for not delivering quality teachers to [their] school...the Board and Superintendent of Schools respect us as one of the community organization players in the public arena that know how to strategically organize and move large numbers of people. [They see us as] a legitimate player."
> —Madeline Talbott. Chicago ACORN

By summer, CPS had committed to additional hiring, incentive programs for substitutes in e hard to serve ACORN neighborhood schools, and a pilot project with ACORN on teacher retention. ACORN is currently discussing proposals for "lead teachers" with the newly-elected Chicago Teachers Union leaders and with CPS officials. ACORN members see the recruitment of high quality "lead teachers" as critical to successful teacher retention and to teacher-initiated school-based professional development. To support these initiatives, ACORN will release research reports on teacher vacancy and quality and disseminate data through community meetings and trainings. Meanwhile, ACORN members continue the fight for an end to overcrowding, equity in school resources and funding, utilization of school buildings for community activities, and accountable principals and local school councils.

When their report was released, student members chose to meet with principals to discuss and work together to reduce suspensions, expulsions, and dropouts at their schools. Generation Y members also brought this report to the Board of Education, pressing them to change their zero tolerance policy — to stop suspending students for minor incidents and develop a system-wide strategy of alternatives. Nationally, they presented their findings at the Zero Tolerance Conference sponsored by the Harvard Civil Rights Project in 2000.

Generation Y works in partnership with ERASE, a national alliance of community and policy organizations working for racial justice in public education. Generation Y also works in coalition with the Community Justice Initiative, a coalition whose focus is education and organizing around issues to prevent the criminalization of youth.

Blocks Together

Blocks Together is a multi-issue grassroots organization that brings together parents, youth, teachers and community residents to develop their leadership skills to bring about change and improve their schools. Their constituency consists of local low-income members on the northwest side of Chicago; of whom 48% are African American, 49% Latino, and 3% Caucasian. Blocks Together's education organizing has an active core of over 100 leaders, 30% of whom are youth. Leaders identify issues, plan strategies, formulate demands, door knock to promote events, and take all roles in public events, press conferences and negotiations with public officials. As part of the leadership team, youth between ages 11 and 18 also fill all of these roles.

Blocks Together began education organizing in 1997. Blocks Together's most active education campaign to fund school construction and repairs for the severely overcrowded schools in West Humboldt Park. Muñoz Marin Primary Center, for example, has been at 300% capacity. The school has no library, no lunchroom, no gym, and the janitor's closet has served as an office for the school counselor. Cameron School buses out 300 students per day. Two local schools have been forced to go to year-round schedules to respond to overcrowding. This campaign has been approached on a local, citywide and national level.

Leadership Development. Leadership development is key to all of Blocks Together's work. Parents, students, community members and teachers choose all issues to be addressed, develop strategy, door knock to encourage attendance at events, and run all public events, press events and negotiations. Leaders are encouraged to take on new roles to further develop them as leaders. Trainings are provided to leaders throughout each campaign. These trainings focus both on the specifics of a campaign – e.g. how CPS makes budgeting decisions – and on leadership skills, such as strategic planning, public speaking and door knocking. Trainings are run by Blocks Together staff, as well as by outside trainers from the National Training and Information Center, other community organizations, and the Cross City Campaign for Urban School Reform.

Public Meetings and Events. Blocks Together involves as many parents, students, teachers and community members as possible in its campaigns. To force public officials to make commitments in front of a large base of leaders, Blocks Together holds neighborhood public meetings in the neighborhood, with up to 650 people per meeting, where leaders present demands to public officials. At these meetings, leaders give testimonies, present demands, negotiate, and encourage community participation in open floor sessions. Media is invited to cover the event, and leaders speak with the press.

The leaders themselves choose all issues and strategies for these public meetings, door knock in the neighborhood to encourage attendance, and make presentations at local institutions. Before events, Blocks Together runs training sessions to prepare parents for negotiation sessions with the officials. They anticipate possible scenarios and role-play the scenarios to learn how to be flexible in the actual moment. Public meetings are followed by smaller negotiations, in which details of public agreements are ironed out and timetables set.

Pressure Tactics. Blocks Together uses multiple tactics to advance campaigns. When CPS delivered furniture to Muñoz Marin School for the promised mobile units to relieve overcrowding, but then informed the school that the mobile units were to be given to another school, Blocks Together effectively mobilized community leaders to run a media campaign in response. Several television channels and the *Chicago Sun-Times* covered the incident. The CPS delivered the units as promised. If public officials refuse to attend public events, or renege on agreement made to the community, Blocks Together holds protests and demonstrations. Melissa Spatz commented, "If they won't come to our meeting, we take the meeting to them."

Local Coalitions. Blocks Together has built a local coalition of nine schools in its community to do joint work on school construction and other education issues. Working together, the schools can leverage more power in negotiations with CPS and leaders see the systemic failure to fund schools in minority, low-income communities.

Blocks Together also works in coalition with three other community organizations in Chicago — the Brighton Park Neighborhood Council, the Albany Park Neighborhood Council, and the Northwest Neighborhood Federation. All four organizations have similar missions and participate in NPA (National People's Action).

> We all work with the same constituency - low income, predominantly Latino, many Spanish speakers. Leaders from these other organizations face the same issues that our leaders do, and employ the same strategies…alliances are important for all of the work we do, so we can leverage more power.
> — Melissa Spatz, Blocks Together

Successes. The schools involved in the school construction campaign have all seen major victories. Stowe School has won over $2 million dollars in repairs, including the replacement of the school's broken windows; a new roof; and ceiling repairs.

> I was afraid to come to school because those ceiling tiles were falling down, and it used to be really cold in the classrooms with the broken windows. Now I feel better going to school every day.
> —Raymond Collins, Blocks Together Youth

At Lowell School, CPS removed lead paint from the walls and repainted the school. Both Stowe and Lowell also received funds for GED classes for parents and community members, with on-site day care. At Pablo Casals School, where snow would gather on the roof each winter and avalanche down as students were entering the building, leaders won a $500,000 roof repair. Muñoz Marin School, initially at 300% capacity, was given temporary mobile units to alleviate overcrowding. Blocks Together won a commitment from the Board to build a new school to eliminate overcrowding in three area schools and $2 million has already been allocated to purchase the land. The school construction campaign has also encouraged broader parent involvement in the target schools. Over 2,500 parents have attended Blocks Together campaign events, taking an active role in improving their children's schools.

Youth Involvement. Blocks Together's Youth Council has actively participated in all of these campaigns, and has worked on its own campaigns as well. The Council identifies youth issues and develops youth leadership skills, as they take ownership of what is happening in their own school and learning that they can effect change. The youth participate in all planning meetings, door knock to encourage attendance at public events, speak in negotiations and in public meetings, and speak with the press. Together with the youth council of the Brighton Park Neighborhood Council, they have formed a group called Chicago Youth United, which has won funds for youth-designed anti-drug billboards in the 2 communities. They have also launched two education campaigns. The first is for college scholarships for youth working to improve their communities. Youth met with local state senators, who have drafted responsive legislation. Through National People's Action, they have met with federal officials, who have drafted similar legislation. The second campaign is to improve school security measures. Youth are working to obtain more funds for security, as well as improved training for security guards.

National Level. Blocks Together actively participates in National People's Action (NPA). For the past 4 years, NPA has focused on federal legislation to fund school construction and repair. Blocks Together leaders have been able to take their local campaign to a federal level, chairing workshops, press conferences and direct actions around this issue. This has broadened leaders' understanding of the construction issue and of collaboration. It has also provided leverage for Blocks Together in local negotiations, where leaders bring up the federal campaign while fighting for more local dollars.

Rogers Park Community Action Network

Rogers Park Community Action Network (RPCAN) is a multi-issue community-based advocacy organization. RPCAN strives to achieve social justice through organizing and developing the leadership skills of their constituency; promoting sustainable development and involvement in decision making on all issues impacting the community. They serve the Rogers Park community on the North East side of Chicago. Members are 50% African American, 25% Latino, 20% Caucasian, and 5% Asian American; low income and working class. RPCAN's 30 core leaders attend planning/strategy meetings, canvas, phone bank, meet with constituents and politicians, help raise money, and volunteer in the office. Education committee volunteers talk to people at schools and do follow-up with phone calls and meet with people one-to-one. They set up tables at Park District events, shopping centers and the local library. During LSC elections they held briefings on the election process.

RPCAN began "sporadic" organizing around education work in 1990, and since 1994 has worked more consistently, focusing their education efforts on school facilities, specifically relieving overcrowded schools in their community and supporting the work of LSCs. RPCAN organizes its members to go to Board meetings on a regular basis.

> We're noisy, shout at board meetings, make our presence felt. We come in numbers. Vallas will negotiate with RPCAN because we can cost them money by slowing up process.
> — Fran Tobin, Rogers Park Community Action Network

They invite Board members to attend LSC meetings, write to the Board, and inform themselves on capital issues. RPCAN successfully in pressured the Board of Education to relieve overcrowding by building a new Jordan School, purchasing a site to build a new Field School, and building an addition on Gale School.

RPCAN is a member of the Chicago School Leadership Development Coop, which coordinates citywide community group involvement in the LSC elections and training. They work with Schools First on educational policy issues such as State Chapter 1 funds, and SB 652. Their work with PURE led to the two groups filing a joint complaint with the Office of Civil Rights and the Department of Education about the discriminatory effect of the ITBS by CPS.

Schools First

Schools First is a single-issue advocacy membership organization which organizes LSC members, parents, and community residents to press for changes in their local schools, at the school system level, and at the state level. Schools First members strongly believe in the power of Local School Councils to make important decisions for their school communities. Schools First has a citywide constituency, joined in a common mission of keeping schools first. Schools First was founded by Designs for Change in 1991, after DFC realized that the LSC members needed an organization that could provide training and support to enable parents to become advocates for their children, to lead strong LSCs, and to protect the autonomy of Local School Councils through training and policy campaigns.

Schools First does not have an independent budget, they work as a volunteer organization and have no paid staff. The membership is 54% African American, 31% Latino, 1% Native American, 11% Caucasian, and 3% Asian. There are 50 core leaders, 10 of whom do substantial organizing. Members participate in monthly meetings (to problem solve local LSC issues and learn about issues), lobby legislators at home and in Springfield, collect signatures for petitions, testify at legislative and School Board hearings, provide LSC election support, and make site visits to schools to help train LSCs.

> We provide LSC election support — we have provided election support since the beginning, since we are one of the few education organizations whose constituency is elected officials. Election support entails advice on how to run an election, how to set-up everything from flyers to garnering support on the local level.
> — Eric Outten, Schools First

Schools First recruits other LSC members wherever they meet them, some of whom call for advice with LSC problems, including principal evaluation or budgeting or Central Office interference. SF members engage people by going door-to-door in neighborhoods, as well as working through all the pre-existing influential persons, organizations, and gathering places in a community, paying particular attention to the ethnic and cultural organizations that draw recent immigrants or community activists. The organizers go out together in this canvassing effort, compare notes, and make plans to follow up with people they have met. Their organizing is goal-oriented, asking people to commit to come to a particular event or meeting. They are able to draw from over 300 members and have been able to mobilize 50 – 200 people for large demonstrations.

Schools First is striving for schools that are run by a democratic educational process, where there is community control over school policies (i.e., curriculum, principal selection and evaluation, and assessment). One of the strategies SF focuses on to achieve this goal is lobbying. In order to line people up to go to Springfield, SF members phone bank and send fliers. They also use phone banking and fliers to recruit people to attend meetings and group actions. SF coordinates group actions at City Hall or in Springfield to draw public attention to school reform issues. SF members direct and appear on public access TV shows; they visit editorial boards of newspapers *(The Chicago Tribune, Sun Times and the Chicago Defender)* to gain media support and attention; both means of reaching and drawing in the public with their school reform message. Schools First is a member of the LSC Summit Coalition to collaborate on common school reform policy objectives.

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VII. WHAT STRATEGIES DO THE ORGANIZATIONS USE?

In the late 1970s, Designs for Change carried out a national study of child advocacy groups with the support of the Carnegie Corporation of New York. DFC published the findings in Standing Up for Children: Effective Child Advocacy in the Schools (1983). After studying advocacy by eight experienced advocacy organizations as they carried out 52 state and local advocacy projects across the United States, Designs for Change identified five categories that encompass both the internal tasks of a successful organization and the external methods that they use in advocacy. Over the intervening years, our subsequent research has led us to conclude that these Five Areas are equally relevant to analyzing the success of grassroots parent and community groups working to bring about major improvements both in specific schools and on a systemwide basis. An advocacy organization can work for policy changes without using a community organizing strategy, but effective community organizing requires the use of multiple advocacy strategies.

The strategies used in the framework for this report overlap with the DFC framework. The Hazen study interview protocol includes key advocacy and organizing strategies that DFC identified. (See Table 7. Five Areas of Effective Advocacy Practice for a summary of the practices.)

Table 7. Five Areas of Effective Advocacy Practice[23]

LEADERSHIP Maintaining a Strong Organization • Leadership for the project • Dedication of members to systems advocacy to improve services to substantial numbers of children at risk • Learning opportunities for project members • Commitment to improve internal management • Sustaining needed funds
STRATEGY Developing a strategy that shapes action • Cycle of intervention and analysis • Clarity of the advocates' strategy • Focus on a subsystem of the education system that shapes services to a particular group of children at risk • Focus on central issues determining the quality of services to children • Envisioning a clear solution • Bringing about or capitalizing on a major policy change • Focus on implementation
INFORMATION Gathering comprehensive, accurate information • Documenting problems and solutions • Gathering information about relevant systems
SUPPORT Building support • Using mass media effectively • Using your own media effectively • Developing a support network • Building a committed constituency
INTERVENTION Intervening to improve the schools • Intervening at multiple levels • Using multiple intervention tactics • Carrying out specific intervention tactics competently • Bargaining orientation • Assisting educators without undermining advocacy • Persistence

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[23] Donald R. Moore, Sharon Weitzman Soltman, Ularsee Manar, Lois S. Steinberg, and Dan S. Fogel (1983). *Standing Up for Children: Effective child advocacy in the schools.* Chicago: Designs for Change.

Leadership

Leadership to build strong organizations. The community and reform organizations surveyed in this study have maintained and, to some degree, expanded and strengthened their staff capacity over the past fifteen years, including their education organizing staff. There has been very little turnover at the director level of the organizations since they began to organize for education reform. The organizations have benefited from the consistency in leadership that facilitated growing knowledge, expertise, and a network of resources and relationships that the leaders have built up.

Three staffing concerns emerged — a need for more organizers; a need for more diverse staff capacity, including research, communications, policy analysis, and knowledge of educational issues; and a need for "middle" level leaders. As one executive director said, "Where is all the middle management? The program staff? You have a lot of executive directors and people with one to four years experience, but where is the middle?"

Learning opportunities for staff. At least half of the organizations indicated that they did staff development with their organizers and other staff. In the three organizations that have worked with Community Organizing and Family Issues (COFI) over two-year contract periods (Logan Square Neighborhood Association, Organization of the Northeast, and West Town Leadership United), staff learned COFI's four-stage parent leadership development model with the intent to continue teaching it on their own. Other organizations cited national affiliates that supported them with training and research. Most organizations readily identified several areas in which they needed more expertise, including improving teaching and learning, and that they want to do more.

Sustaining funds. The Organizational Budget Chart (Table 5.) compares the total budgets and budget sources of the organizations participating in this study. One impact of the Chicago School Reform Law was to increase the resources available for education organizing. For the LSC election in 1989, Chicago foundations and corporations made funds available on a short-term basis (six – twelve months) to hire organizers to recruit and train LSC candidates. Unfortunately, the foundations then shifted their priorities to funding school improvement efforts inside local schools. Community organizations, however, knew they needed sustained funding. Every community organization has tried to raise far more than they have succeeded in raising, as funds to hire community organizers to work on education have become particularly scarce.

As a membership organization, ACORN depends consistently on the $60 annual membership fee each member family must pay. Logan Square Neighborhood Organization has been creative in obtaining funds from a wide variety of public and private sources to work on education issues. Some community organizations have obtained CPS funds to help fund small schools or small learning communities, before and after school programs, and schools as community centers.

Strategy

Bringing about a major policy change. From the beginning, the strategy behind the passage of the reform act was a classic community organizing and advocacy effort. One important feature of the Chicago school reform strategy was to embody the reform as a major policy change in state law, just as other advocates had embodied rights to special education and bilingual education, for example, in state and federal law. This has proven to be a critical benefit, since it means that those who want to change the law must succeed in the multi-step legislative process, with the defenders of the law having multiple chances to stop negative changes from occurring. Further, because the reform is embodied in state law (1) it is possible to enforce rights granted under the law through litigation and (2) LSC members have a sense that they have legal rights to carry out their work, which motivates them to fight to maintain these rights.

As part of the spring 1995 legislation, LSCs and principals won a critical policy change — putting the principal in charge of the supervision and scheduling of school engineers and custodians, a power that they had fought for since 1988. It was this shift in authority that made it economically feasible for schools to remain open in later afternoons, in the evenings, and on weekends, without paying outrageous overtime for engineers and custodians. This expanded school access facilitated the growth of schools as community centers, enabling community organizations to make the school the center of the community, offering classes and activities for parents and neighborhood residents.

Another important feature of the law is that it has built its own constituency, i.e. 6,100 LSC members, including 4,500 elected parent and community representatives. Time and time again, these LSC members have been the backbone of grassroots efforts to keep the law from being watered down in Springfield and to push for rights granted under the law to be honored by the school system. Yet, for every LSC that has taken an active stance and developed a working relationship with their principal, staff, and community organizations, there is an LSC that lacks that level of independence and collaboration. LSCs are unevenly trained and some are easily manipulated by their principal.

Focusing on central issues with a clear strategy and solution. The School Reform Law focused most specifically and clearly on the decision-making sub-system of the CPS, the balance of power between central and local decision-making. By implication, the law directly impacted many other sub-systems, from budget and personnel to curriculum instruction and staff development.

Pressing for implementation. Once the law was passed, an ongoing intensive campaign was necessary to implement the law and to protect it from efforts by those who had lost power to recentralize the system and take power back from the LSCs. Monitoring the was beyond the capacity of any single organization. To that end, a series of city-wide coalitions took responsibility for systemic policy work that would maintain and protect the law, most recently the LSC Summit Coalition and the Leadership Development Coop. Organizations have committed in different ways to an ongoing ten-year effort in Springfield, including maintaining paid lobbyists, organizing and training LSC members to lobby the General Assembly, and developing relationships with the Chicago delegation of state legislators in their home offices in Chicago.[24]

Using a systems analysis. Many organizations were not familiar initially with a systems analysis approach to analyzing either the public education system or other social and political systems. The systems analysis approach contrasts with that of case advocacy organizations, which focus on individual persons or issues, and with the direct action organizing of Alinksy-style community organizations, which fight for winnable victories that don't change how an entire institution operates. Many organizations tend not to see individual issues as indicators of how a school system bureaucracy is treating all of its schools and students. They do not map out all the relevant knowledge of the system that can help them advocate successfully to change policies and practices – including the official rules; the unofficial rules and understandings about how things really work; the budget; the political leanings of individuals to be allies, opponents or in the large "lukewarm middle" group; basic data that are publicly available; the disorganization within the organization; or the state and national political connections.[25]

In using a systems approach, it is essential to break the big system, like an institution, into its many sub-parts and focus on relevant sub-systems. Many organizations have learned elements of the systems analysis approach, both working in coalition with groups like Designs for Change and Neighborhood Capital Budget Group, or in their own investigation of particular issues, such as special education, early childhood, or facilities.

> **Example.**
> **School Facilities.** Dozens of Local School Councils have advocated for facilities improvements both before and after the Mayor and CEO Vallas announced the Capital Improvement Plan to fund rehabilitation, repair, and expansion of schools. Some LSCs worked with skilled community organizers, while others developed their building campaign on their own. In either case, many LSCs learned how the facilities sub-system works. They learned to recognize the difference between the formal structures and policies of the Board's several offices that impact facilities decisions and the actual informal ways the officials worked.
>
> For example, after a hearing at which an LSC testified about the decrepit conditions at their school with specific requests for repair, a facilities official would tell the LSC that their school was now "on the list" to be repaired for that region. LSCs learned that being "on the

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[24] Consistent members of the coalitions have been Designs for Change, the Lawyers' School Reform Advisory Project, Parents United for Responsible Education (PURE), Schools First, and the Teachers Task Force. More recent members include Cross City Campaign and Participation Associates. An important past member was the Chicago Association of Local School Councils (CALSC 1991-1999). CALSC was an independent umbrella organization that all LSC members could join. CALSC held a large annual training conference on current issues and provided regular newsletters to their members with updates on policy and legislation, provided training to individual councils, and referred LSCs to appropriate assistance groups, like the Lawyers' School Reform Advisory Project. Management problems within CALSC's host organization and CALSC's own internal divisions led to its untimely demise.

[25] Designs for Change (1997). *Map Making. Understanding Education Systems to Change Them. A Resource Guide.* Chicago: Author.

list" meant nothing, it was one of the Board's many stalling tactics. To get action on their demands, LSCs learned to bring 30 – 100 supporters with them to the Board meeting, and enlist visible allies, such as Operation Push or their alderman or state legislator. They targeted media coverage of a walking tour of their school showing the bad conditions, or organized a demonstration at a hearing. They strategized to intervene at different levels – at the school, the regional and central offices, the School Board and the Capital Improvement Commission, and at the state and national levels. They learned how to deal with specific individuals, how politics unite or divide the various officials, and how to leverage one group against the other.

> [Community residents, LSCs] advise us on what tactics to take, i.e., right now it does not make sense to pressure the principal, we need to meet with the state politicians because they have access to the money. Or, we do not think that we can go further unless we have some media coverage.
> — Jackie Leavy, Neighborhood Capitol Budget Group

> Vallas respects us as one of the community organization players in the public arena that know how to strategically organize and move large numbers of people. You are a legitimate player.
> Madeline Talbott, Chicago ACORN

Yet, for many groups, strategy development is still fragmented with a lack of focus. Organizations and schools are competing for attention from school officials in a way that allows the bureaucracy and School Board to pit one group or school against another and maintain their own agenda.

Information

Research has been critical of the progress of Chicago School Reform since the three reports, published in 1985, that documented a nearly 50% CPS dropout rate, began to undermine the legitimacy of the leadership of the CPS. To be effective, a group needs to develop an accurate map of the system, document the problems, use accurate statistics, review the relevant research for effective practices, and search nationally for solutions, with examples of where they work.

> **Example.**
>
> **Community Organizing and Family Issues.** In their parent leadership education program, Community Organizing and Family Issues (COFI) trains parents to interview 300-600 parents about their own needs, and their perceptions of the needs of the local schools and community. They use the research results to do strategic planning for targeting issues. COFI staff have trained Logan Square, West Town Leadership United, and Organization of the Northeast in these methods. West Town parents and students have interviewed between 300 to 600 parents and teachers in order to create task forces to do strategic planning. ONE reports doing action research by parents about school practices. ONE obtains the statistics available on the CPS web site and also gets information from the individual school report cards, published by the Illinois State Board of Education each fall, showing local school data compared to the district and the state.

Support

Organizing a committed constituency. Organizing parents and community members who become a knowledgeable base that can speak publicly, plan and carry out strategy and actions, and recruit new members is the foundation of work for all groups committed to an active community constituency. Outreach is done in a variety of ways. ACORN has a crew of organizers who go door-to-door everyday. They stand outside schools to get parents to sign various petitions. Some principals have given them a list of all parents and their addresses to aid in their outreach work. Bethel/COR organizers go to laundromats, shoe stores, grocery stores, anywhere parents and community might gather with informational flyers, calls to meetings, and petitions. Generation Y gets permission to go into a school during students' lunch break to recruit for their group and their campaigns. Rogers Park Community Action Network's education committee volunteers talk to people at schools and do follow-up with phone calls and one-to-one meetings. With organizers' help, Schools First members prepare to testify at school hearings and board meetings, meet with alderman and state legislators in their home offices in Chicago, and lobby them in.

Most of the 19 organizations have sent members to Springfield at some point in the last 10 years. Lobbyists have observed that engaged LSC members argue most persuasively with state legislators. Most legislators aren't used to hearing from Chicago parents and may be taking their vote for granted. However, when these constituents appear in a legislator's offices asking for support for increased Chapter 1 funding for the schools in that district, with accurate dollar figures, the legislator calculates more carefully what a "yes" or "no" vote will mean.

Developing a support network. Groups build a support network by creating a group of allies or a coalition, small or large, with whom to increase their support and power base. "Burn no bridges" and "No permanent friends, no permanent enemies," are useful guides in long-term coalition work. The basis of a coalition can be wide or narrow, sometimes limited to accomplishing only one specific objective. Other coalitions last longer, mature, add members, and become more sophisticated in their strategies. Twenty-six organizations belong to the Leadership Development Coop and eight community organizations belong to the Cross Cities Campaign. These groups share information, recruit for LSC elections, organize and lead LSC trainings, coordinate local work, and come together for joint action on citywide issues.

Documenting the problems and publishing solutions in the major media

The local media. Together, education reform groups and community organizations have worked strategically to shape the public discussion of education in the city's media, citywide and local neighborhood papers, AM and FM radio, the major network TV stations, as well as the Latino radio and TV stations. Latino media cover education on a daily basis and can be counted on to attend a press conference, actions, or a hearing. Logan Square Neighborhood Association used local media to cover their community learning centers to recruit more parents and community. Bethel/COR calls the media, "and they call us." Bethel/COR goes on a popular radio show with a predominantly African-American audience. LSC Summit organizations have regularly made successful requests for meetings with editorial boards of three of the city's dailies, the *Chicago Sun-Times*, the *Chicago*

Tribune and the *Chicago Defender*, the city's oldest black newspaper; formed ongoing relationships with the education beat reporters and cultivated relationships with free lance writers. For eleven years, *Catalyst* has investigated and reported monthly on the progress of Chicago school reform.

However, during the past five years, the reform community lost media sympathy during the ascendancy of Mayor Daley and his new leadership team at the CPS. The new administration was able to use the media as a bully pulpit and the reform organizations have been on the defensive. The Capital Improvement Campaign created a positive aura for CEO Vallas that made it initially difficult for the school reform community to get "equal time" and a fair debate on many issues. Community organizations and LSCs struggled to obtain for media coverage for their fight for a fair share of capital improvement funds, which were weighted toward schools designed to attract more middle class students to the public schools, from parochial, private secular, and suburban schools.[26] The reform community has persisted with critical analyses and opposition to the Vallas administration's educational policies and slowly the data has emerged. Recently, the press has shifted toward more balance in their reporting.

The national media. Chicago reform organizations have also sought national media coverage, especially op ed pieces in the *New York* and *Los Angeles Times*, and maintain relationships with both the Chicago staff persons from those papers, as well as with national staff.

> **Example.**
> Since 1985 Designs for Change has published reports and alternative position papers opposing retention as a harmful and expensive strategy that does not work. In 1998 DFC engaged a national evaluation expert, Ernest House, University of Colorado at Boulder, to write and speak on the CPS retention policy for a conference involving 22 sponsoring organizations, critiquing the system's retention policy..[27]
>
> In 1999 consultants to the National Research Council published national negative findings on high stakes testing and retention policies and decried the civil rights implications of such urban system policies.[28] In 2000 Robert Hauser (University of Wisconsin-Madison), and Jay Heubert (Columbia University) edited the report. Hauser, Heubert, and Gary Orfield, education professor now at Harvard University and formerly at University of Chicago each

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[26] See Weissman (1998, November) and Williams (2000, December).

[27] Ernest R. House (1998, November). *The Predictable Failure of Chicago's Student Retention Program.* Paper presented at the Conference on Rethinking Retention to Help All Students Succeed. Chicago. The New York City Public Schools had hired House to evaluate their Promotional Gates program in the early 1980's, a program of high-stakes testing, promotion and retention, and intensive intervention for students retained in grade. After analyzing the NY data, House concluded that students' academic gains did not persist over time and that the students held back were much more likely to drop out of school. From looking at the CPS policy and preliminary data, House predicted the same results and emphasized the racial discriminatory impact of the policy.

[28] Jay Heubert and Robert Hauser, eds. (1999). *High Stakes: Testing for tracking, promotion. and graduation.* Washington: National Academy Press.

contributed statements to the critique by Designs for Change of the Consortium on Chicago School Research analysis and policy recommendations regarding CPS's retention and social promotion policy.[29]

Intervention

Intervening to change policy at multiple levels with multiple tactics. Because the school system is a complicated political bureaucracy with complex political and funding relationships with state and national authorities, bringing about significant changes in policy that will benefit large numbers of children requires groups to intervene with multiple tactics at multiple levels. Tactics include:

- Negotiation with and between relevant decision-makers
- Direct actions by larger groups (large meetings, demonstrations, rallies, sit-ins, pickets, non-violent direct actions at selected targets, vigils)
- Legislative action (to amend a law, to pass a new law, to block proposed legislation)
- Media activity favorable to the community or reform organization
- Investigative research and written evidence and argument supporting the community's position
- Gaining allies from diverse arenas and forming short or long-range alliances on narrow or broad points of agreement
- Legal action (filing lawsuits, becoming party to another party's suit, filing a complaint with the appropriate government agency, requesting public information based on the Illinois Freedom of Information Act and institutional policies)

A sophisticated campaign uses many of these tactics in combination to increase the pressure on relevant officials who have the power to grant or block LSC and community demands. Changing policy means to change the written official documents as well as the day-to-day practices of officials charged with implementing the policies at all levels of a school system. Officials suddenly become more willing to negotiate when forty parents noisily break up an established public meeting agenda in front of the media, have prepared speakers to talk to reporters, and written position statements for distribution. The coalition campaigns to protect the School Reform law and ACORN's campaign for teacher quality in neighborhood schools are examples of sophisticated campaigns that employ simultaneously many of the tactics described above.

Direct pressure and negotiation with relevant decision makers. At the local level the LSCs negotiate with the principal about commitments made at LSC meetings, in the School Improvement Plan and budget, for example, hiring a bilingual social worker or the next steps by the principal to get T- wiring access to network the computer lab. They press principals for more information about decisions they make, so they can evaluate the decision. LSCs have negotiated the creation of Personnel or Hiring Committees in order to participate in the hiring of staff for open positions.

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[29] Melissa Roderick, Anthony S. Bryk, Brian A. Jacob, John Q. Easton, and Elaine Allensworth (1999). *Ending Social Promotion: Results from the first two years.* Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research; and Donald R. Moore (2000, April). *Chicago's Grade Retention Program Fails to Help Retained Students: Better alternatives exist to Chicago's costly mistake.* Chicago: Designs for Change.

Community organizations also meet with school principals to negotiate issues of concern, for example, hiring more parents for the safety patrol, following through on the Board's stated promise to put up three new classrooms on the playground, as the LSC has directed the principal to do. Generation Y student members meet with principals to improve discipline practices and policies to reduce suspensions, expulsions, and dropouts in the three high schools where they work.

Monitoring promises made by the Central Office in any school's facilities campaign requires constant checking in with the principal, the facilities offices, and any allies that have spoken publicly to support the cause, such as the local alderman, as illustrated by the experience of the Sullivan Local School Council in the Introduction to this paper.

Direct action. Community organizations use direct actions most commonly to target the central Board of Education and the school Superintendent,as illustrated in examples presented earlier.

> Direct action is a key component of all ACORN campaigns — demonstrations, pickets, sit-ins, squattings, street blockings, etc. — usually leading to negotiations on demands. ACORN's experience is that direct action not only is the best way of winning, but also the best way to increase members' involvement and investment in planning and fighting for social change.[30]

PURE held a vigil opposing the Iowa Test outside of the Mayor's office on the 5th floor of City Hall during the week students were taking the Iowas.

Electoral work at different levels. At the neighborhood level, this has typically meant involvement in LSC elections, recruiting parents and community members to run, get-out-the vote campaigns, and supporting candidates. Organizations also target elected official for support. For example, ACORN holds accountability meetings "with all kinds of public officials," to find out what they are doing about specific conditions or promises made. This resulted in getting funds from Governor Ryan's massive infrastructure funding appropriation, Illinois FIRST, for schools in one neighborhood where they organize. Bethel/COR organized vans to drive down to Springfield to lobby on school funding and Senate Bill 652. At the federal level, Bethel/COR lobbied for the renewal of the Perkins Act, in collaboration with the Center for Law and Education, which would bring vocational education funding to their neighborhood schools.

Filing lawsuits and formal complaints and persistence. Four groups mentioned that they used this approach. PURE, joined by Rogers Park Community Action Network, filed a complaint with the Office of Civil Rights and the Department of Education about the discriminatory effect of Iowa testing done by the CPS. In summer 2001 OCR found sufficient evidence of the discriminatory impact of current testing policies and requested that the CPS revise their policies to eliminate that discrimination. CPS announced publication of a revised promotion policy requiring that school officials use multiple measures, including the Iowa test score, to determine whether a student could be promoted to the next grade. PURE and Rogers Park Community Action Network claimed a victory, though they remain skeptical that Board practices in using the test will substantially change. They persist in monitoring the testing and retention practices at the schools and the use of waivers at the regional level, knowing that they might need to re-engage OCR in the issue at a later date.

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[30] *Membership Handbook, 30th Anniversary Edition.* (2000). Washington D.C.: Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN). p.5.

> This is an administrative process, the impact is unclear, but has brought scrutiny by the federal government. They launched an investigation, contacted CPS, put out a notice that changes will have to happen and they will take further action if necessary. This could result in the Justice Department getting involved.
> — Julie Woestehoff, Parents United for Responsible Education

Such persistence is necessary in the face of the Board's overwhelming reliance on the Iowa Test to measure system success, and the need for deep changes in policy and practice to reverse the harmful impact of the Iowa test on teaching and learning practices throughout the system. Not only is the Iowa test the anchor of the promotion policy, but it is also the motive force behind the test-driven curricula that have been created and pushed on Chicago schools. The scripted summer school curriculum is mandated for teachers to use, and inspectors visit to see that a teacher is on page 43 at 10:20 on a certain morning in July. The board then created a 934-lesson scripted curriculum for use in every subject at all grade levels, distributed it to all schools in fall 2000, where the voluminous pages may be used under a principal's watchful eye, or sit in a storeroom. The Consortium on Chicago School Research recently released a study documenting the impact of the test-driven curriculum in the elementary schools, showing that authentic intellectual work and standardized test-prep curricula are often incompatible.

Assisting educators without undermining advocacy. Working with school staff requires collaboration and negotiation to improve teaching and learning practices in a school. Principals and teachers may respond with delay, resistance, or superficial compliance, believing that they have regional or central office support for keeping the status quo. However, where there is a small core of teachers who have been working together, or a principal or an LSC with a vision for working with the school community to improve the quality of the students' education, it is possible for community organizations, school reform organizations, and educational assistance providers to collaborate. Working in one school requires the assistance provider or community organization to be aware of the many levels of the school system's bureaucracy that are involved in any given policy and to summon support and ward off interference from sources outside the school. Sometimes groups assisting educators are selectively able to engage them in larger policy campaigns.

Persistence. The history of the Chicago School Reform law is a case study in persistence with a long-term strategy to reform a major school district to improve the equity and quality of education for all students. Since 1985, community and reform organizations have persisted through the campaign to pass the law, through the first six years of Local School Council formation and leadership and through the last six years of concerted political opposition by the Mayor and the education leadership team he installed at the Central Office and on the Board of Education.

At times reform groups were able to be proactive and anticipate moves against Local School Councils, including legislative bills introduced in the General Assembly to weaken the LSCs or to take away State Chapter 1 funds from LSC control. They mobilized community organizations and LSC constituencies from the grassroots level to put pressure on elected officials at their home office and in Springfield. Yet, the same leaders have had to witness defeats and delays at all levels of the system as the Central Office reasserted its authority over local schools, especially through the choice of principals. However, in the spring of 1999, when Paul Vallas introduced Senate Bill 652 to eviscerate the legislative powers of the LSC, LSCs and community organizations revived their political strength through citywide collaborative efforts and created new coalitions, like the Leadership Cooperative. They were able to defeat SB 652, to recruit candidates for the 2000 LSC election, regain community organizations' right to train LSCs, and obtain funding to continue their coalitions and common strategic work. Further, they have benefited from recent research reports that have documented failures of the Central Office educational policies in improving the dropout rate, improving overall high school achievement, and in continuing to improve elementary reading progress.

VIII. WHAT SUCCESSES HAVE THE ORGANIZATIONS HAD?

To look at the successes that organizations have had in organizing for school reform, we return to the five major issue areas on the agendas of community organizations since the Chicago School Reform law was passed. The five major areas are:

1. **Effective Local School Councils**
2. **Protecting The Law And Changing Systemwide Policies**
3. **Parent And Community Leadership Development**
4. **Facilities Success: Improving Facilities, Safety, and the Supportive and Educationally Challenging Climate of the School**
5. **Quality Of Education**

1. Effective Local School Council Success

Chicago School reform has witnessed the growth of healthy LSCs, with at least half functioning well and some becoming strong independent leaders in mobilizing parents, community, and staff to improve their school. In spite of the six-year attack on LSCs coordinated by Superintendent Vallas, under the aegis of Mayor Daley, LSCs continue to fight to maintain their powers, both at the local level and systemwide and in the state legislature. LSCs are still campaigning to increase their fair share of State Chapter 1 funds, which the Board froze in 1995, and for the first time this spring have gotten a bill out of committee in the House supporting a Chapter 1 increase for local schools. The Mayor and Superintendent oppose the bill, but the Chicago Principals Association reversed their position and now supports the bill. Several indicators of LSC success follow.

Participation in LSC Elections

In every LSC election (fall 1989, fall 1991, fall 1993, spring 1996, spring 1998, and spring 2000), a coordinating coalition of community groups, school reform groups, and active LSC members have pressed the Board to publicize and support the election and have conducted a coordinated effort to recruit candidates. In each election year, foundation funding has been successfully sought so that approximately 20 community organizations received special funding to recruit and train candidates and then to provide training to winners subsequent to the election.

In the first election, there were 17,000 candidates for 5,400 parent, community, and teacher seats and in subsequent elections the numbers have been in the 7,000 to 8,000 candidate range. Ten thousand candidates would assure a contested election for virtually every LSC. The Central Board and the Mayor have done little to publicize and aggressively support the election. If they would get behind it and truly collaborate with the reform groups and community groups, 10,000 candidates would be very feasible.

While training was not originally required for LSC members, most members received training in areas of basic LSC rights and responsibilities — school improvement planning, budgeting, and evaluation and selection of principals. In addition, about half received training about analyzing achievement data, good educational practices, and school and community partnerships. Providers included the principal, school reform groups and the Board of Education. At the same time, 40% reported that they did not receive enough preparation to do their job well.[31]

In 1998 the Chicago School Leadership Cooperative formed out of a desire by community groups for more sustained involvement in helping LSCs and holding them accountable, so the community groups would not just be involved at election time. For the 2000 election the foundations funneled their support to community organizations through the Leadership Coop. The Leadership Coop had 26 founding member organizations and worked with a total of 85 LSC and community groups in the 2000 election. The sustained efforts of the Leadership Coop, community and school reform groups led to the Board conceding that school reform and community groups could train the LSC members following the elections.

LSCs at Work

In 1997 the Consortium on Chicago School Research reported their findings on how the LSCs were working, through 1995, based on a representative sample of LSCs.[32]Key findings included:

- LSC members are well-educated, compared with the overall population of the U.S.
- LSC members reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of the city. LSC members were 42% African-American, 11% Latino, 40% white, and 4% Asian. (These figures represent a change since the original election to more white LSC members.)
- In 1995 the typical LSC met at least once a month, had a quorum 90% of the time, and had two or more active committees.
- The number of hours LSC members reported spending per month on official duties indicated that 50% spent five to ten hours a month, 17% spent four or fewer hours, 20% spent eleven to twenty hours, and the remaining 13% spent 21 hours or more. Similarly, LSC members spent additional hours beyond formal LSC duties attending committee meetings, volunteering, or being involved in extra-curricular activities or the PTA.
- Based on detailed questions about whether the LSCs surveyed carried out a set of specific practices in principal selection, school improvement planning, and budget development, the Consortium judged 50% – 60% of LSCs to be high functioning, 25%-33% to be performing well but needing support, and 10%-15% with serious problems (ranging from inactivity to long term conflicts).[33]

Success of the LSCs in operation is also reflected in the high number of LSC parent members who serve more than one term and move from being members to chairpersons, in the pursuit of training beyond the required basics, and in efforts discussed below to improve school facilities and the quality of teaching, learning and achievement. At a systemwide level, LSC parent and community members have fought to change system policies. Finally, another important evidence of success has been the persistence of LSC members to organize and advocate at all levels of the school system and the city and state politics to protect the powers of their LSCs, as discussed in the next section.

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[31] Ibid., p. 10.*

[32] Ibid.

[33] Ibid., pp. 5-19.

2. Policy Success

Community organizations and Local School Councils recognized that they would have to protect the decision-making powers and resources that they gained under the Chicago School Reform law. One of the most consistent campaigns has been to protect allocation of State Chapter 1 funds under LSC control. Since the passage of the School Reform Law, the Central Office has persistently tried to reverse the part of the law that gave more State Chapter 1 funds to the local schools under the decision-making control of the LSCs. Yet the State Chapter 1 funds are a lifeline for local school reform. Without resources to spend on staff development, new books and computers, parent training, or new staff positions, LSCs could not redirect the educational program at their school.

Milestones in the Campaign for LSC State Chapter 1 Funds

1991. In spring 1991, the General Assembly's leadership told school reform groups that they had agreed to cut $6.68 million from the State Chapter 1 funds controlled by LSCs. An aggressive campaign in which LSCs, school reform groups, and community groups fight resulted in its being withdrawn in less than two weeks.

1995. One of the major proposals initially advanced by Republican lawmakers was to wipe out the local control of State Chapter 1 funds, and to use the savings to balance the school system's deficit. A broad coalition of LSCs, school reform groups, and community groups was mobilized and Chicago foundations funded DFC and Cross Cities Campaign to conduct a media and organizing campaign to protect the school reform law. This was one proposal that the Republicans withdrew in direct response to the counter-campaign by the school reform groups. DFC, Schools First, PURE, and CALSC were leaders in this effort.

1998. In spring 1998, the Chicago Board launched a major effort to gain central control over two-thirds of the State Chapter 1 funds controlled by LSCs. In monitoring the annual spring legislation, DFC found this plan buried in a much larger bill to restructure educational funding in Illinois and alerted school reform and community organizations. All members of LSCs (including parents, community reps, principals, and teachers) mounted a major phone-calling and letter-writing campaign that generated thousands of communications with legislators. In the end, this effort was stopped completely. DFC, Schools First, PURE, and CALSC were leaders in this effort and a number of community groups were active.

1997-98. From summer 1997 through winter 1998, a special committee of the Illinois House conducted an investigation of sensational charges that Clemente High School had used its State Chapter 1 funds to support Puerto Rican independence groups with ties to terrorists. School reform groups saw this legislative committee as potentially making broad recommendations to restrict State

Chapter 1 funding control at the school level. Recent state audits of Chapter 1 spending in Chicago had revealed no patterns of Chapter 1 misuse. LSC members, school reform groups, and community groups produced documentation showing how State Chapter 1 funds were used systemwide, met individually with members of the committee, testified before the committee, organized intensively in the legislative district of the Committee's Chair (who represented the area served by Clemente High School). In the end, the committee was won over, and their recommendations for broader reforms in State Chapter 1 mirrored proposals by DFC, Schools First, and other school reform groups.

Two other important policy campaigns that LSCs and community organizations have waged have been against the Daley administration's efforts to wipe out the significant powers of the LSC in the School Reform Law, either through legislation or harassment and intimidation of individual Local School Councils.

> **Examples.**
> **Legislative Campaign for LSC Powers.** In spring 1999, the school reform groups and community organizations were successful in blocking Senate Bill 652, a legislative package from CEO Vallas that was aimed at fundamentally weakening the key powers of LSCs and principals. Senate Bill 652 would have required LSCs to choose a principals from only those who had received favorable evaluations by the regional office, when one of the three fundamental powers of LSCs established by the original legislation was to evaluate yearly their principal and select their principal every four years. DFC organized a citywide Stand Up for Our Children Coalition, joined by several community organizations. In its first major action 200 parents, LSC members, and community groups demonstrated at City Hall. A large-scale letter-writing, phone-calling, and lobbying campaign ensued in which every step in the progress of SB 652 was closely scrutinized and publicized by school reform groups.
>
> Senate Bill 652 also would have given CEO Vallas the power to intervene in loosely defined "educationally troubled" schools and disband LSCs, remove the principal, and transfer staff. LSC members made weekly trips to Springfield to testify at House and Senate Education Committee meetings and lobby their legislators; they visited them at home and made sure legislators' Saturday morning "open air" sessions focused on SB 652. A coalition of LSCs, reform organizations and community groups worked with legislators to amend SB 652. In the end, SB 652 was stripped of all of its controversial changes. This victory was achieved despite the overall popularity in Springfield of Paul Vallas and the Mayor's school reform team.
>
> **LSCs Successfully Resist Central Office Interference with Principal Selection.** At the same time of the legislative campaign against SB 652, the Central Office was interfering with three LSCs across the city in their principal selection process — Jahn School, Stowe School, and Kennedy High School — the latest in a series of highly public battles between Vallas and an LSC over the right to choose a principal. These three LSCs were singled out for having initiated a search for a new principal. Personnel from the Office of School and Community Relations attended each LSC meeting with principal election on the agenda. They interrupted LSC members mid-speech, misquoted the law, accused LSCs of not following appropriate procedures, and organized support for the candidate that the Central Office preferred. LSC members from these schools joined the delegations to Springfield and reported the high-handed tactics of the Central Office, which prompted legislators to question Mr. Vallas and to express disapproval of such blatant interference with established legal procedures and rights of the LSC. The LSCs used many advocacy tactics to press for protection of their principal selection rights, including media coverage, testifying at public

hearings, and organizing community support. In the end, the Central Office was not able to impose their candidate or protect the existing principal. The three LSCs prevailed and successfully chose a new principal, each of whom had stronger credentials as an educational leader than the previous principal.

3. Parent And Community Leadership Development Success.

> To find and support leaders from the community... includes finding LSC candidates, but it goes beyond that. We have to have a broader group of candidates [because] there needs to be a sustained leadership development strategy and organizing process outside of the LSC. [Take, for example] community policing — you cannot expect the police to do it all. You cannot ask the candidates to fix the schools for the surrounding community. [One goal is to] foster on-going community involvement and see a successful generation one after the other. We age and there needs to be a new recruited group of parents.
> — Jackie Leavy, Neighborhood Capital Budget Group

Developing consistent parent and community leaders became a key priority to every community group organizing for school reform. But groups also needed to develop leaders knowledgeable about school issues and dealing with school staff and school and political officials. One of the stronger models of parent leadership development is that developed by Community Organizing for Family Issues (COFI). COFI applies their model to the five schools in which they organize, but also enter into two-year contracts with community organizations to train them in using the model. The three organizations in this study who have learned their parent leadership development for school reform from COFI are Logan Square Neighborhood Association, ONE, and West Town Leadership United.

Logan Square Neighborhood Association's Parent Initiatives.
In working with COFI to develop parent leaders at the ten schools in the LSNA area, LSNA developed projects based on needs identified by parents. The schools have a high Latino enrollment, so the organizers and parents must work bilingually in the schools. Two LSNA initiatives have been to:

- Improve reading achievement by training parent reading mentors and tutors, and to
- Establish a bilingual teacher training program at one of the ten neighborhood schools.

To support literacy, each school appointed a staff person to work with the LSNA-trained parent mentor/tutors, and continued their training in the specific methods of reading and student needs at their school. The mentor/tutor coordinators work with teachers to create good collaborative relationships with the parent mentor/tutors, overcoming the resistance teachers may feel toward trusting parents to work in the classroom. An LSNA staff person meets monthly with the principals of the ten schools, who in turn support the work of the parent mentor/tutors. Each school has a cadre of ten parent mentor/tutors, who not only work with students individually and in small groups, but develop ways to involve more parents, including Family Reading Nights, bilingual parent lending libraries, and supporting Links-to-Literacy, a systemwide program that encourages students to choose and read books on their own. Reading achievement at the LSNA schools has tended upward.[34] The LSNA schools are an example that many schools throughout the system have also followed — engaging parents as reading volunteers, then realizing the necessity to train the parents, and, in some cases, including them in regular staff development opportunities.

The second initiative by the LSNA schools has been to establish a bilingual teacher training program at Monroe School, responding to the recognition that many parents came from Central and South American countries with prior college experience and were eager to continue their education and become teachers. Chicago State University, with a strong bilingual education program and experience in working in other Chicago public schools, is partnering with LSNA and offers the program on-site at the neighborhood school.

The Board of Education created a Parents as Teachers First (PATF) program, which has become an counter example of parent training. In low-income neighborhoods parents are hired at $7 an hour, receive basic training at the Board, and are responsible for making home visits to parents with children under age 3 to help them prepare their children for school. With little field supervision , inappropriate materials, and few accountability procedures, the program has minimal impact on preparing children for school or increasing parent involvement parents in the schools.[35] PURE and others have noticed that PATF employees are assigned on work time to be present in a show of support for Central Office speakers at Board meeting.

4. Facilities Success: Improving Facilities, Safety, and the Educational Climate of the School

As in most cities, Chicago schools must fight to improve the safety of their children on the way to school, in the school yard, and inside the school. LSCs have been very responsive to these needs. The City of Chicago cooperates by supporting school safety patrols, providing training and partial uniforms to a group of parents and community residents who work part time outside the school, serving as crossing guards at busy corners in the neighborhood. They patrol the playground before and after school, develop informal ways of communicating with students to prevent problems and establish procedures for communicating with the school office if a serious problem develops. LSCs have chosen to use discretionary funds to buy walkie-talkie radios for the parent patrols and to hire security guards as needed inside the school, often an off-duty or retired police officer.

To improve the school spirit and morale, many schools, especially elementary schools, took several steps in the first years of reform to reinvent the image of their school in the community by requiring students to wear uniforms, developing a school vision and set of school rules prominently displayed on the walls, and inviting parents and community to more events at the school. Events included Open Houses early in the school year, book fairs on Report Card Pick-up days, Family Reading Nights, multicultural celebrations with a feast of dishes brought by staff and parents for international potluck suppers, dramatic productions, and assemblies. Some schools that had had no after-school programs with student clubs, tutoring, or sports worked to create those opportunities.

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[34] In the six schools where Logan Square Neighborhood Association works most actively, the percent of students reading at or above the national average in 1990 ranged from 10.9% to 22.5%. By 2000, the percent of students reading at or above the national average ranged from 25.4% to 35.9%. The gain ranged from 7.3% to 21%.

[35] *Parents As Teachers First, Initiative Status Report* (1996). Chicago: The Chicago Panel.

Creating a safe and supportive learning climate inside the school for all students was a more challenging effort, but LSCs creatively identified supports that would provide help to students, rather than punish and push them out of school. Supports included creating new staff positions, such as a full-time bilingual social worker to work with students, teachers, and parents; training parents as reading tutors; engaging outside volunteers as reading and math tutors; and engaging community businesses to provide incentives for attendance or reading campaigns. LSCs sought principals who would be visible educational leaders, with a history of effective work with teachers and a commitment to a challenging curriculum for all students; some LSCs learned to work with their existing principal to become a more forceful champion of effective teaching and problem-solving with students who were experiencing early learning difficulties, especially with reading.

LSCs quickly labeled their overcrowding and facility concerns about cracking plaster, faded old paint, leaking roofs, broken furnaces, broken windows, lack of air conditioners, bathroom stalls without doors or toilet paper. While some schools mounted successful campaigns to relieve overcrowding with classrooms, additions and new buildings right after the School Reform law was passed, it took Mayor Daley's Capital Improvement Plan to finance school repair, rehab, and construction on a large scale throughout the system. Schools all over the city realized they could get some of the new funds to improve their school.

> **Example.**
> **Schools Become Community Centers.** At Funston School, an LSNA school, the cadre of ten parent mentor/tutors expanded to a volunteer group of 100 parents, each of whom completed 300 hours of work at the school before receiving a modest stipend at the end of their first year. They continued to work throughout the school aiding teachers and students with discipline and making the school climate more community friendly. When LSNA and Funston won their facilities campaign for an addition to relieve overcrowding and create a community center, parents designed the curriculum of the center's activities. The curriculum includes English as a Second Language, GED, and computer skills classes.

5. Quality of Education Success

Improving the quality and equity of education and student achievement has been a driving force for neighborhood school LSCs. LSCs have worked out thoughtful visions for their school, struggled through writing multi-page school improvement plans (SIP) with the principal and staff, allocated funds for the SIP, and looked for results. Some LSCs were better able than others to monitor the day-to-day success of their SIP, and to tell whether it was just a paper document gathering dust or whether the planned activities, like staff development, were enabling teachers to learn new ways of teaching and how individual students learned.

In the 1990's, using the conceptual framework of the "Five Essential Supports for Student Learning" developed by Designs for Change, the Consortium on Chicago School Research carried out several studies — of principals, of teachers, of LSCs, and of student performance — that documented perceptions of change in the elementary schools, relationships among adults, and student performance.[36] For the period from 1990-1996 in the elementary schools, the Consortium concluded that: "Overall, our analyses indicate broad-based systemwide improvements in student learning, stronger in mathematics, but also in reading."[37]

Using the same data, Designs for Change analyzed the trend in elementary school reading achievement between 1990-1997.[38] Based on Consortium teacher and student survey results, Designs for Change found a set of practices that were significantly different in elementary schools that were low-achieving in 1990 but then gained substantially in reading from 1990 to 1997, as compared with similar low-achieving schools that were low-achieving in 1990, then made no significant test improvement. A major finding from these studies was the strong relationship between a high level of collaboration and trust among the adults, teacher commitment, and improved educational quality and student achievement. In these schools the teachers reported a significant level of involvement in decisions, of teacher collaboration, teachers taking collective responsibility for the school's improvement, trust among teachers, trust of the principal, and trust among teachers and parents. They also rated the LSC more highly in contributing to improving the school's educational program and environment.

> The value of adult collaboration in improving quality of education has been proven extensively in the research about Chicago School Reform. For example, Boone School brought in a new principal from outside the system, outside the state. He is still principal eight years later. He, with support of parents and the LSC, was able to make changes in staff. Boone is a model multi-ethnic, multi-national and multi-lingual school. Reading and math scores have improved. [Staff] analyze test scores and make instructional changes to meet students' needs. They track them over time and share them with the LSC.
> — Julie Woestehoff, PURE

In early 2001 Designs for Change extended their analysis to cover the intervening period, from 1997-2000. Focusing on the 84 (of 435, or approximately 20%) Chicago elementary schools that were low-achieving in 1990, results showed that by 1997, the percent of students at or above the national average had increased from 23% to 38%. The current study tracks these schools through the spring 2000 Iowa testing. It shows that these elementary schools have continued to outpace other low-achieving elementary schools. Even though these "Substantially Up Schools" are 82% low-income, they now have 45% of students reading at or above the national norm.

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[36] Anthony S. Bryk, Yeow Meng Thum, John Q. Easton, and Stuart Luppescu (1998, March). *Academic Productivity of Chicago Public Elementary Schools.* Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research, p. 35.

[37] Anthony S. Bryk, et al. (1998, March).

[38] Designs for Change (1998, April). *What Makes These Schools Stand Out: Chicago Elementary Schools with a Seven-Year Trend of Improved Reading Achievement.* Chicago: Author.

The stories behind the numbers show how LSCs, principals, teachers, parents, and community members led and persisted in reading improvement. A few examples of how schools achieved this goal follow. Each of these schools increased Iowa reading scores at least 14% between 1990 and 1997.

Examples.

Developing a Multi-Cultural Curriculum to Unite a School. At Hibbard School in a port-of-entry neighborhood on the city's North Side, students speaking 20 languages were struggling to learn their subjects in a new language. The student body of over 1000 was 96% low-income. Staff, supported by the LSC, developed a multicultural curriculum that would teach not only about the Latino, African, Anglo and Asian roots of the students' cultures, but teach respect for diversity through active inquiry about each other's lives and collaborative learning. The LSC allocated funds to train parents to tutor children in reading to strengthen reading skills of both parents and students and made parents partners in the classroom as well as at home. Hibbard School has published their curriculum and made it available to other schools interested in making student achievement and cultural diversity key strengths of their school.

Using the Building Blocks of a Balanced Reading Program. Deep in the heart of the State Street corridor of the high-rise ghetto known as the Robert Taylor Homes, Beethoven School became the focus of intensive intervention by the Ounce of Prevention Fund to improve social supports to children and their families. When Chicago School Reform brought in LSCs, Beethoven chose a new principal with solid experience in improving achievement, who began to turn the school around with staff development for despairing teachers, books for students and their families, and a schoolwide focus on reading achievement. Language arts began with 90 minutes in the morning and continued as a part of a two-hour after-school program. Item analysis of the Iowa tests helped teachers focus teaching and a large scale tutoring effort. The school encouraged students to participate in an after school Great Books Inquiry program and to read as many books as they could on their own in the citywide Links-to-Literacy program.

Using State chapter 1 Funds to Lower Class Size. The Galileo Academy of Math and Science Academy LSC was committed to using State Chapter 1 funds to keep the class size at 20 in Grades 1-3 to facilitate the successful teaching of reading. They also contacted their neighbor, the University of Illinois at Chicago, for support and responded favorably to a reading professor's request to work in the primary grade classrooms. Her special interest was the early identification of children with reading problems with the necessary assessment and intervention to prevent them from being passed on from grade to grade as low achievers until they were identified and classified, inappropriately, as special education students in what, all too often, becomes a dead end track.

Inclusion of Special Education Students: A Policy Success. At the systemwide policy level, a critical improvement in the quality and equity of student achievement has come as a result of the successful resolution of a court suit, *Corey H. v. the Chicago Public Schools and* *the Illinois State Board of Education*, brought in 1992 by parents of students with disabilities. The suit charged both the CPS and ISBE with failure to implement federal regulations that require students with disabilities to be educated in the least restrictive environment with appropriate supports and to be able to attend their home school. The CPS, and the state of Illinois, had extremely high rates of segregated classrooms for students with disabilities. The settlement has put into motion an eight-year court-monitored implementation plan. Each year thirty schools are chosen from those that apply for three years of planning and implementation grants totaling over $150,000 to revamp their curriculum, educate special and regular education teachers to collaborate, and include regular and special education students for content area subjects, not just gym, lunch, and art.

IX. WHAT OBSTACLES AND CHALLENGES DO THE ORGANIZATIONS FACE?

Internal Obstacles

Organizational Capacity. Every community organization and citywide school reform organization is working "more than full-time" on their own issues. Multi-issue community organizations juggle funding and staff to organize for school reform and the other key goals of their organizational mission — affordable housing; mixed-income neighborhoods; neighborhood economic development; living wage, job training, and job creation, to mention a few. The citywide school reform organizations organize and advocate on their own key issues and collaborate to mount policy campaigns. All of these organizations are constantly short staffed, lacking funds to hire and train organizers who can expect to stay on staff for a number of years and develop a deepening expertise in education organizing.

As Fran Tobin, Rogers Park Community Action Network director remarked , "Leaders on our Education Committee are active LSC members, so don't have a lot of time to deal with issues outside their school. The positive is that they are tied into their schools, but the negative is that they have so many demands on them."

Complexity of education as an organizing issue. School reform requires a long-term strategy of multiple interventions, monitoring implementation, understanding social and political systems, and developing complex relationships with both constituents, constituency organizations, and elected and appointed officials. School reform is a process, not a series of tangible victories. It is time intensive, for understanding the issues, educating organizing staff, and then educating the constituency with easy-to-understand materials that relate directly to the school situations of their children.

The issues can be hard to , like testing. Mayor Daley was recently asked by a journalist, what the norm in standardized testing meant, and he tried to answer.

> "Tell me about the national norm [sic] test," Kay asked Daley. "We were discussing it. Most people don't realize that you only have to answer 50 percent?"
> "Right, the national norm," said Daley. "And what you're looking at, and that's why, you'd say, they'll tell you that a thousand students in a school and ten percent are reading at a national norm. Then you have to find out what percentage are only reading, when you say a national norm, got 50 percent of the questions right."
> "That's all you have to do to meet the national norm?" asked Kay. "Get 50 percent of the questions right?"
> "Well, that's one of the problems," said Daley. "That's one of the issues you're looking at. As long as 50, 52, 53. And what you're saying is reading is a problem, not only for Chicago, but for the country."[39]

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[39] Sharon Schmidt (2001, March). Daley 'thinking outside the box'? *Substance*, 25 (7): 11.

Regarding PURE's leadership on testing issues, it did not come easily:

> [With] the Iowa Test, I had the gut feeling things were wrong, but did not understand norm-referenced v. criterion referenced tests. Other staff in our organization are parents, and they do not understand the issues like this. Scientific margins of error you learn about in graduate school. We have had to equip ourselves...we have worked hard to prepare documents that average parents can understand.
> Julie Woestehoff, Parents United for Responsible Education

Discussion of educational issues in the media and political campaigns tends to reduce school reform to a series of either/or choices, instead of long-term processes. Educational and political leaders indulge in "blame the victim" rhetoric that diverts accountability away from the professionals who are actually in charge of making the educational systems work and blames the students, their families, and their neighborhoods. Families experience the educational issues as personal crisis (failure, retention) requiring immediate action and are often not prepared to make it a community issue. Parents are not used to organizing around educational issues, and the more traditional parent organizations and committees — the PTA, Title I or bilingual parent councils — are not used to playing an advocacy role at the school.

Identifying the appropriate strategies. Community organizations come from different ideological perspectives, and some are engaged with a national organization that contributes strategy, training, and/or research support. For community organizations that have been operating from the direct action strategy and are capable of mobilizing large numbers of constituents to win significant neighborhood victories, reforming the educational bureaucracy sufficiently to impact the daily learning of children poses other questions.

Organizations need to fully integrate education into other community issues, yet the models for doing so are not common. Healthy sustainable communities need jobs, affordable housing, effective schools, and many more strong services and institutions. Yet, how a multi-issue community organization can envision a strategy to accomplish all these goals remains an important task to be done.

Tension between community organizations and LSCs. As indicated in Section V, community organizations and LSCs may have different perspectives on the nature of the relationships between the LSC and the community organization. The community organization may assume a spokesman role for the community and feel entitled to as the recognized leader. That spokesman may see strong, independent LSCs as a threat to their leadership. LSCs look at community organizations and may see an on-again off-again pattern in their response to local school issues. Community organizations question how much they want to get involved in the day-to-day workings of the LSCs and the schools.

Gap between the community organizations and citywide reform organizations. Everybody is working more than full-time on their own issues. Many coalitions have grown up throughout the past 15 years, bringing the two kinds of organizations together. Yet it has been hard to sustain a long-term coalition that could educate its members, develop strategy, and persist in concerted interventions at local, systemwide and state levels.

External Challenges

LSC training and support. As described in earlier sections of the report, the effort to train over 6000 LSC members every two years has suffered from lack of resources and Board of Education interference. The criminal background check procedure on elected LSC members is now tougher than for any other public office in the state. While state officials go to jail for mishandling hundreds of thousands of dollars, state audits found no patterns of State Chapter 1 funds by LSCs. At the same time, the criminal background check for parent volunteers is difficult and time-consuming and impedes the growth of parent volunteers in the schools. While you do not have to be a citizen to vote in an LSC election, parents and community residents who are not yet legal residents are afraid of exposing themselves to immigration investigation by submitting to Board requirements for background checks for school volunteers.

Foundation support shift away from community organizing. After the first year of school reform, the foundation community shifted focus from support for community-based organizations to what foundations thought would make a difference in the classroom. This undermined the community organizations' ability to organize a stable constituency of parents and community members to work for school reform. The community organizations perceived the shift as pressing them to work inside the schools on specific programs and to make specific policy changes. While such priorities may be valuable, the community organizations believed they too knew what were key priorities in their neighborhood schools. With requests for proposals so tied to the foundations' priorities, some organizations felt they could not use grants to do what they wanted to do. The Chicago Annenberg Challenge supported whole school change, but emphasized the expertise of external partners in teaching and learning and underestimated the need to work with principals and LSCs to support teachers changing their practices and to engage parents in the improved teaching and learning.

Predictable opposition from the Central Office 1989-2001, but intensifying in 1995. Most urban school superintendents are trained to administer top-down bureaucracies, with little understanding or motivation to delegate power to the school level. The first two superintendents under the Chicago School Reform Law, Ted Kimbrough and Argie Johnson, tolerated the new structure and were able to collaborate to some degree with the LSCs and community and reform organizations. However, opposition intensified in 1995 with Mayor Daley's move to recapture control of CPS staffing prerogatives and budget, as discussed earlier. Community organizations described specific instances of Central Office opposition, as illustrated by these examples.

Examples.

Central Office commits, then backs out.

> We have a lot of commitments made to us and they [CPS] back out at the last minutes. Leaders have learned that they can win a commitment and celebrate, but they need to be vigilant. For example, we had the land cleared and furniture delivered in anticipation of our new mobile units, but then the CPS said that they were going to give the mobile units to another school. We did a lot of rallying and got the media involved, and in the end we got the four units. It is very work intensive to do the follow-up and make sure that community members are involved in every step of the process.
> — Melissa Spatz, Blocks Together

Central office doesn't support local creativity.

> I would say that it can be difficult to be creative in the schools because administrators are frightened of Paul Vallas. They are not willing to try things unless given explicit directions from him, which won't happen. ONE had experiences in high schools where Vallas said to be creative, yet this is not enough, [the principals] want a written letter saying do A, B, and C. Vallas is a bad influence. We can do good work in schools when there is a good principal; I am sure other people have said the same thing.
> — Sarah Jane Knoy, Organization of the North East

Political Opposition of Mayor Daley puts LSCs up against the juggernaut. Organizing for school reform in Chicago can easily bring groups in conflict with City Hall, as Mayor Daley has made the CPS a key institution on his governance agenda of the city. At the same time that the Mayor freed up funds for a major Capital Improvement Campaign, the top down educational policies and efforts to undermine the existing legal powers of the Local School Councils have created constant tensions between Local School Councils and the Central Office, and, indirectly, the Mayor and his public allies. While community and reform organizations have been persistent and strategic in their interventions to improve the schools, intimidation, harassment and threats of retaliation against schools and individuals have blocked reform efforts more frequently than before 1995.

> The unified political Daley octopus — Park District, City Hall, schools — work like a dictatorship...the unified system is hard to crack. People are afraid to buck system, [it's] hard to find allies who are willing to take risks...The CPS is not a benign dictatorship, doesn't care if kids are educated, not there for kids. [It's] there to run a system, make Daley look good. The Board has no accountability, except to [the] Mayor...they don't care about people, parents. Strengthening LSCs is key...
> — Fran Tobin, Director, Rogers Park Community Action Network

Business community more sensitive to Mayor. The school reform movement enjoyed support from corporations in the early years of reform, including support for LSC elections, a visible retired business leader on the interim school board that inaugurated the School Reform law over 18 months, and support for corporate employees to run for LSC (time off, use of equipment, support groups in the workplace). Since 1995 the business community support has shifted away from LSCs, and been very sensitive to the Mayor and city politics, this was especially recognizable in the changing attitudes of Leadership for Quality Education (LQE), a group that represented the business community in the school reform movement. From the beginning of Vallas' appointment as CEO, LQE advocated working collaboratively with him; other business groups followed suit. Leaner corporate organization gave way to top-down management style and playing ball with City Hall as the operative bases for business collaboration with the school system.

Underestimated difficulty of LSCs organizing on policy issues. The school reform movement underestimated the difficulty of schools working together on policy level issues at the system and state level, as well as the difficulty of creating and maintaining broad based citywide campaigns and coalitions including community organizations. LSC members became embroiled in learning how to carry out their many responsibilities, managing conflict, and solving problems.

Even at the local level it can be difficult for schools to work together on common issues, with each school guarding their connections, relationships, and promises from the Board. Rogers Park Community Action Network cited how the principals in their area were unwilling to meet with other principals, i.e., on overcrowding and fighting for new facilities or designing space jointly, when they could have benefited from the same consultants or opportunities. Because each principal, each LSC, and each community organization may have promises from the Central Offices, or contracts through the Board of Education or from the City, the long strings of those promises and contracts, as well as direct harassment and intimidation, may inhibit collaboration, as the individual school or group seeks to protect what it perceives as its advantage.

In the rush to train LSC members, it has been difficult to create opportunities to bring community organizing staff and directors together to learn about educational issues and strategy. Cross City Campaign has been effective in doing so in the past two years with eight community organizations. Community organizations are wary of each other and want time to build trust in any proposal for common work.

Organizations with Potential for Community Organizing for School

In our research we have observed several categories of groups that could do school reform organizing, given certain conditions. They include community organizations, faith-based organizations, coalitions and organizations of LSC members, community development organizations, progressive groups of teachers and principals, and youth organizations. Other important civic groups and institutions could increase their support for school reform. The business community has vacillated in their support LSCs, but the potential for more collaboration exists. University-based and non-profit research centers concerned with developing strong communities could more systematically integrate the workings of LSCs and community organizations in their research and action projects. Currently, the Consortium on Chicago School Research is doing a collaborative study of overcrowding with the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF).

Currently, community organizations face two large challenges to school reform organizing. First, they lack stable funding. With stable funding the groups would be able to hire and train organizers at reasonable salaries, staff who would be likely to stay with an organization for at least a few years. They could become part of a growing movement of community, labor and other organizers. However, even if organizations do receive such funds, they face the second challenge, the political one, of working, at times, against the Democratic administration of the city and balancing their organizing and advocacy with the restrictions and favors that city grants may bring. Currently, community or housing development organizations say they can't build stable communities without better schools. Yet these organizations are dependent on the city for building permits, zoning changes, loans and funding packages, and other municipal services.

Organizing for school reform requires also a willingness to get involved at local levels and overcome reluctance to get involved at citywide and state levels, where the groups directly take on the Mayor. Funders would need to make an analysis of the kind of intimidation that the Democratic Party in Chicago uses to deter community organizations from school reform organizing and advocacy at a local, citywide, and state level. Community organizations need more education to prepare people to staff, organize and advocate for school reform and quality of education issues. Citywide school reform organizations need a careful analysis of how groups of LSC members could coalesce on a neighborhood, citywide or issue basis.

In analyzing the community groups that have stayed with organizing for school reform since they began, we have identified key elements that seem to be important to their persistence. Some community organizations currently have a service orientation, and would need to adopt both an organizing and advocacy commitment. Organizations like Beverly Area Planning Association (BAPA) and Association House are examples of groups more committed to service than organizing and advocacy. There are many community organizations like BAPA, focusing more on helping their local school, but not organizing a parent and community constituency. Association House has organized students to support school reform issues, but that has been because of personal organizing commitments of staff members, and not the mission of the organizations. Many similar social service agencies would have to shift to an organizing and advocacy mode. The elements that characterize successful long-term organizing for school reform include:

- Having paid organizing staff with opportunities for collaborative learning and leadership development.
- Willing to challenge the existing power structures of the city and school system and the ability to withstand retaliation and threats by those power structures.
- Holding philosophical, faith-based, or ideological beliefs about social change that provide an analysis and context within which to place the fight for equity in public education.
- Organizing a constituency among low-income students and families. For a service or case advocacy organization, this means moving into an organizing and systems advocacy mode.
- Engaging with and organizing youth, especially middle grades, high school students, and college students, as spokespersons for the issues in their schools.

- Having an analysis of how to integrate multiple issues, including education, in a larger strategy for developing strong communities.
- Willing to learn to do advocacy by learning to develop strong organizations, gather information and do research, plan strategy, build allies and coalitions, and intervene in the schools on multiple levels.
- Willing to use conceptual frameworks for looking at schools, school systems, the political system, the change process, as well as at organizing and advocacy. Learning about the quality of education issues from resources and experts and through direct engagement with students, parents, staff and community members.
- Using reflective practice in evaluating their actions to implement strategies.

X. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Community Organizations Need Consistent Long-Term Support

Community organizations want to be able to hire more community organizers so that they can devote staff to education organizing. They want designated funds for hiring organizers so that general operating funds do not have to be used.

Community organizations want to collaborate to build citywide campaigns for local school and system improvement and to increase their negotiating leverage with the school system. They need funding to facilitate the collaboration over time to build the cohesion of coalitions.

Community organizations and foundations should work together to develop standards for grants. For example, funding should cover a 3-5 or 3-10 year period in order to build capacity of organizers and organizations; research shows that schools take 3-7 years to turn around.

Community organizations need access to training for organizers about promising practices in what makes good schools; teaching skills; working in multiple roles as organizers, advocates, and partners with schools; the change process; and in effective organizing and advocacy at local and system levels. However, community organizations want to be able to chose the outside organizations with whom they work to obtain this training.

Community organizing would benefit from funding an organizing framework clarification process. Together representatives from the various national and local organizations and networks would share their conceptual approaches to organizing strategy and discuss:

- Similarities and differences in strategy and focus in education organizing. Together they could develop a larger framework for viewing the school systems, the change process, and focus and tactics of organizing. In clarifying their philosophical positions around organizing they could become clearer about where they disagree and where they agree.
- Strategies that integrate organizing for school reform with other issues that multiple-issue organizations face.

2. A Diversity of Organizations is Necessary to Support Community Organizations Working for School Reform

In Chicago, three major groups organize for school reform:

- Community organizations that organize a constituency to improve local schools and the school system,
- Local School Councils and their parent and community constituency, and
- Citywide school reform groups that organize a constituency to improve local schools and the school system.

The Chicago community organizations built on a long tradition of neighborhood organizing as they embraced organizing for school reform. Groups have developed sophistication in working inside the schools and in the community at the same time, negotiating at all levels of the schools system and political system to bring about changes both at their local schools and system wide. By working closely with parents, community organizations have been able to expand from easier "presenting" issues, like school safety and poor facilities, to quality of education issues ranging from bilingual education programs, inclusion for special education students, to adequate science labs and challenging college-prep math curricula for elementary school students.

As Local School Councils have exercised their powers to hire the principal, develop the School Improvement Plan, and allocate funds, they have often needed to organize parent and community supporters to attend meetings, to resolve crises (such as when promised resources are being withheld by the Central Office or a roof caves in over the gym), and to campaign for new buildings, science labs, computer resources, and books for the school and classroom libraries.

Citywide school reform organizations include both those that organize a citywide constituency and advocate for local and system policy changes and those that may not organize their own constituency, but offer specialized assistance to the community and citywide organizations that do. The citywide school reform organizations have led the coalition campaigns to defend the School Reform Act in Springfield and to raise systemic quality of education issues, including the negative impact on student learning of the high-stakes use of the Iowa standardized test, the Board's scripted curriculum, and retention of students in grade..

There are three overlapping circles of advocacy and organizing. All advocacy groups do not organize constituencies. They file law suits, release studies, and do not mobilize a constituency. All community organizations do not advocate for policy and systemwide change, but the two practices over lap. The most effective school organizing in Chicago is done by groups who both organize a constituency and take a balanced approach, matching local needs with systemwide change initiatives.

Organizations that provide specialized assistance include Neighborhood Capital Budget Group (technical and organizing support to schools to obtain Capital Improvement Plan funds); the Lawyers' School Reform Advisory Project (legal advice to LSCs on selecting principals and containing Central Office interference) and Leadership for Quality Education (business community support for principal evaluation and selection and school improvement policies). Other advocacy organizations that have become involved in specific issues include MALDEF (overcrowding, bilingual education), Operation PUSH (school facilities), and the Urban League (State Chapter 1 funding).

In addition, Chicago has developed an infrastructure of university-based and non-profit external partners that work collaboratively inside schools to improve teaching and learning. The Chicago Annenberg Challenge (CAC) funded over 75 external partners to work with networks of schools over six years (1995-2001). ACORN, another example, has worked closely with the Small Schools Workshop, a CAC external partner.

Community organizations have their own national and local networks and organizations that they rely on for training, research, and other support. In Chicago, these include the national ACORN, National People's Action (NPA) and National Training and Information Center (NTIC), National Organizing Alliance (NOA), Expose Racism and Advance School Excellence (ERASE), and the National Council of La Raza.

3. Changes in Public Policy Create Rights for Parents and Community as School Decision-Makers

The Chicago School Reform Law (1988) created a structure for parent and community decision-making on elected Local School Councils. The law changed the basic power dynamics of the school system by giving parents and community legal rights and responsibility for decision-making (hiring principal, planning School Improvement Plan, spending funds) and accountability. This encouraged community organizations to make organizing for school reform a greater priority. The law gave access and legitimacy to parents and community as decision-makers at their local school. Local School Council members are elected public officials with rights and responsibilities. Those rights cannot be taken away unless the law is amended. An increasing appreciation for the strength of legal rights has encouraged groups organizing for school reform to use other legal and government recourse in organizing and advocacy for school reform, including the Freedom of Information Act and filing complaints with the Office of Civil Rights, U. S. Department of Education. Over 10,000 parents and community residents have participated in Local School Councils; many LSC members are re-elected to serve consecutive terms and they have been willing to defend their rights in the state legislature and offices of their elected representatives.

Many states have a section in their school code for laws that only apply to large districts, namely, the urban districts. Community organizations could investigate passing laws applying to those districts that give parents and community more decision-making power.[40]

Research documents evidence the factor most closely related to improvement in the quality of student achievement, especially in the elementary schools, is adult collaboration.[41] Community organizations work with Local School Council members and organize partnerships with parents and the community to advocate and monitor the implementation of significant improvements at local schools. Community organizations also work citywide to improve system policies for equity in the allocation of resources (for example, certified teachers, substitutes, building rehabilitation, relief of overcrowded classes and buildings, facilities construction, core administrative and social support staff, bilingual education, special education).

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[40] Charles L. Kyle and E. R. Kantowicz (1992). *Kids First — Primero los ninos.* Springfield, IL: Sangamon State University Press.

[41] Susan Ryan, Anthony S. Byrk, Gudelia Lopez, Kimberly P. Williams, Kathleen hall, Stuart Luppescu (1996). *Charting Reform: LSCs Local Leadership at Work.* Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research. O'Connell, Mary (1991). *School Reform Chicago Style: How Citizens Organized to Change Public Policy.* Chicago: Center for Neighborhood Technology.

4. Community Organizing for School Reform has Achieved Quality of Education Goals and Successes in Chicago

For ten years, community organizing for school reform in the context of Local School Council autonomy and decision-making has improved the quality of student achievement, particularly in the elementary schools.[42] Not only have organizations been able to raise issues around student learning and achievement, but they have waged successful campaigns to improve the conditions in which children learn (safer schools; rehabbed and new school facilities; parents involved as volunteers, trained tutors and in family learning activities). Through the ten-year experience of working with the schools to bring about change, organizations have learned many lessons about effective ways to balance the roles of organizer, advocate, teacher, and partner with school staff in the process of changing schools. Significant improvements include:

- **Score improvement 1990-2000.** 84 low-performing elementary schools rose from 23% to 48% of students reading at grade level. Research by Consortium and DFC show that adult collaboration, including parents and community, principal and staff, and strong is the factor most closely related to improved student achievement.
- **Improved principal accountability.** There has been a 90% turnover in principals since 1988. Principals are more diverse, reflecting the racial and cultural diversity of the student body; they are more responsive to parents and community. 60% of LSCs do a careful job of principal selection. LSCs can participate in helping select staff for open positions and at some schools have set up joint committees with principal and teachers for staff hiring. Community organizations, like Bethel/COR, ACORN and Blocks Together, have worked to get principals selected who will work collaboratively with parents and community.
- **Community center schools.** A 1995 change in the School Reform Law gave principals the right to determine the hours of the school's engineering staff and the hours that the school would be open. Community organizations used this new provision of the law to create schools as community centers to more fully service the needs of their organizing base. Chicago ACORN, Community Organizing and Family Issues (COFI), and Logan Square Neighborhood Association (LSNA) focused major efforts to develop community-learning centers in local schools.

Organizations have also targeted Board policies that inhibit school progress and have advocated for alternative policies that can continue improvement of the CPS:

- **High Stakes Testing, Retention, Probation and Intervention.** Citywide reform organizations and community organizations have collaborated in research, publishing parent-friendly materials nationally recognized research studies, and opposition to the continued use of high-states testing by the Chicago Board of Education. The Board instituted punitive student retention and school probation policies based on Iowa test scores over the past five years. Results have been to increase the number of students retained in all grades and in an increasing number of dropouts between elementary and high school. Parents United for Responsible Education (PURE), Rogers Park Community Action network (RPCAN), and Designs for Change (DFC) have developed alternative policies and educate their constituencies about these alternatives in order to develop wider campaigns to reform existing policies.

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[42] Susan Ryan, et al. (1996). Designs for Change (1998, April).

- **Quality of Teachers.** Organizations have documented disparities in teacher credentials and experience and the allocation of basic core staff (assistant principals, counselors, social workers) between neighborhood and magnet schools. ACORN and Schools First organizes and advocates for improved staff at specific schools, as well as for improved system policies of staff recruitment and assignment.

APPENDIX

TABLE 1. Chicago Organizational Profiles

FOCUS of ORGANIZATION	NAME	CONSTITUENCY	ORGANIZING OR SERVICE DELIVERY?	YEAR BEGAN EDUCATION WORK	SINGLE OR MULTI-ISSUE?
Community organizations that organize a constituency to improve local schools and at system level	Bethel New Life/COR	Residents in West Side neighborhoods	Organizing	1988	multi
	Blocks Together	Residents in Near West Side neighborhoods	Organizing	1997	multi
	Brighton Park Neighborhood Council (BPNC)	Parents, Students, and Teachers in Near South Side neighborhood	Organizing	1997	multi
	Chicago ACORN	Residents in 3 South and West Side neighborhoods	Organizing	1989	multi
	Generation Y (youth organizing)	Youth and families in 7 Chicago neighborhoods.	Organizing	1997	multi
	Northwest Neighborhood Federation (NNF)	Residents in 2 North West Side neighborhoods	Organizing	1997	multi
	Rogers Park Community Action Network	Residents in North Side neighborhood near lake	Organizing	1990	multi

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FOCUS of ORGANIZATION	NAME	CONSTITUENCY	ORGANIZING OR SERVICE DELIVERY?	YEAR BEGAN EDUCATION WORK	SINGLE OR MULTI-ISSUE?
Community organizations that organize a constituency to improve local public schools	Lugenia Burns Hope Center for Training New World Organizers	Residents in Near South Side neighborhood	Organizing	1995	multi
	Logan Square Neighborhood Association	Residents in North Central neighborhood	Organizing	1980	multi
	Organization of the Northeast	Residents, business owners, workers in North East neighborhood	Organizing	1990	multi
	West Town Leadership United	Residents in Near West Side neighborhood	Organizing	1996	multi
Community organizations that work to improve local schools	Association House Alternative High School Program	Residents in Near West Side neighborhoods	Service Delivery	1983	single
	Beverly Area Planning Association	Parents and residents in the South West neighborhoods of Beverly and Morgan Park.	Service Delivery	1986	single

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FOCUS of ORGANIZATION	NAME	CONSTITUENCY	ORGANIZING OR SERVICE DELIVERY?	YEAR BEGAN EDUCATION WORK	SINGLE OR MULTI-ISSUE?
Citywide school reform support organizations providing organizing assistance to community groups	Chicago School Leadership Development Cooperative	Organizations (cbo's, business, faith, and education), parents, and community activists citywide.	Organizing	1998	multi
	Community Organizing and Family Issues	Families in 7 Chicago neighborhoods	Organizing	1994	multi
	Neighborhood Capital Budget Group	Parents and residents of member organizations, LSCs	Organizing	1994	multi
Citywide school reform groups that organize a constituency	Designs for Change (DFC)	Citywide LSC members, especially parents and community, and their supporters	Organizing	1981	single
	Parents United for Responsible Education (PURE)	Citywide CPS parents	Service Delivery	1987	single
	Schools First	Citywide Local School Council members and parent and community volunteers	Organizing	1991	single

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TABLE 2. Chicago Organizations' Mission and Goals

FOCUS of ORGANIZATION	NAME	MISSION AND GOALS
Community organizations that organize a constituency to improve local schools and at system level	Bethel New Life/Community Organizing for Reneighboring	To build the capacity of community residents and collective actions of individuals in order to empower and strengthen institutions that promote safety, resources, and caring and sharing throughout West Garfield community — to ultimately create a healthy sustainable community.
	Blocks Together	To develop grassroots leadership and empower residents to win substantive improvements in the West Humboldt Park and North Garfield Park communities by increasing the communities capacity to take direct action to address important neighborhood issues; challenging members to take on new roles and develop skills to advocate for their community and themselves; moving area residents from working on symptomatic issues to the root causes of poverty and inequality; and creating neighborhood stability by ensuring that needed resources are invested in the community.
	Brighton Park Neighborhood Council	To create a safe community with a strong infrastructure, improve neighborhood schools, provide a voice for youth, and stabilize local businesses and housing structures.
	Chicago ACORN	To advance the interests of low and moderate income people in every area of their concern; to do grass-roots democratic organizing for power.
	Generation Y	To build student activism and power to work on school reform around racial justice issues.
	Northwest Neighborhood Federation	To develop leaders, build power to take action to improve the quality of life for the immigrant Mexican and Polish residents in the Northwest neighborhoods of Hermosa and Belmont-Cragin.

FOCUS of ORGANIZATION	NAME	MISSION AND GOALS
Community organizations that organize a constituency to improve local schools and at system level (continued)	Rogers Park Community Action Network	To gain social justice that works by organizing and developing leadership among low-income and moderate income residents. To promote more sustainable development and involvement in decision making on all issues impacting their community.
Community organizations that organize a constituency to improve local public schools	Lugenia Burns Hope Center for Training New World Organizers	To promote self-determination among the residents of Bronzeville, to determine the direction of the life of the community.
	Logan Square Neighborhood Association	To create and maintain a multi-ethnic economically diverse neighborhood and to resolve issues identified in the community.
	Organization of the Northeast	To build and sustain a successful multi-ethnic mixed economic community on the Northeast side of Chicago.
	West Town Leadership United	To build multi-ethnic, mixed-income, racially diverse West Town into a family friendly community through leadership development and community organizing.
Community organizations that work to improve local schools	Association House	To promote the growth and development of individuals, families, neighborhoods. To provide quality social services to a multi-cultural, predominantly Latino Community. To foster community development and leadership and offer social, cultural and recreational activities.
	Beverly Area Planning Association	To encourage and support excellence in the public schools of our community and promote the well-being of our children.
Citywide school reform support organizations providing organizing assistance to community groups	Chicago School Leadership Development Cooperative	To provide information, training, networking to support local school reform. To coordinate communications support and actions of citywide concern (e.g. LSC elections and LSC training).
	Community Organizing and Family Issues	To build a movement of family focused leaders and organizers that strengthen the voice of families at all civic levels.

FOCUS of ORGANIZATION	NAME	MISSION AND GOALS
Citywide school reform support organizations providing organizing assistance to community groups (continued)	Neighborhood Capital Budget Group	To empower the community to make sure that they have adequate facilities. The quality of the infrastructure is integral to the quality and equality of what goes on instructionally in the building.
Citywide school reform groups that organize a constituency	Designs for Change (DFC)	To serve as a catalyst for major improvements in the public schools serving the 50 largest cities in the country, with a particular emphasis on Chicago; through applied research, policy analysis, and direct involvement to aid reform.
	Parents United for Responsible Education (PURE)	To empower Chicago public school parents to advocate for improvements in their children's education.
	Schools First	To ensure that all students receive the excellent education they deserve; support strengthening and autonomy of LSCs and keeping the spirit of school reform alive.

TABLE 3. Racial and Ethnic Constituencies Served by Chicago Organizations

Organization	**African-American**	**Asian**	**Caucasian**	**Latino**
Association House	20%			80%
Bethel/COR	97%			3%
Beverly Area Planning Association	39%	3% other	58%	
Blocks Together	22%	2% other	12%	64%
Brighton Park	5%	5%	20%	70%
Chicago ACORN	75%			25%
Chicago Leadership Coop	50%	10%	10%	30%
COFI	5%		5%	70%
Designs for Change	40%	2% +2% Native American + 1% other	15%	40%
Generation Y	40%	5% (Arab American)	5%	50%
Hope Center	100%			
Logan Square	8%		22%	70%
Neighborhood Capitol Budget Group	60%		10%	30%
Northwest Neighborhood Federation	2%		18% (10% Polish immigrants)	80%
ONE	30%	14% + 1% other	25%	30%
PURE	55%	$5 + 1% other	10%	30%
RPCAN	50%	5%	20%	25%
Schools First	54%	3% + 1% other	11%	31%
West Town	5%	10%	5%	80%
CPS Students 2000-2001	**52.3%**	**3.2% + 0.2% Native American**	**9.9%**	**34.4%**
Chicago Population (1995)	**38%**	**4% other**	**38%**	**20%**

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TABLE 4. The Nature of Youth Involvement at Chicago Organizations

Organization	Nature of Youth Involvement
Association House	Youth are advisors and advocates on issues pertaining to youth, such as education, police brutality, and anti-gang initiatives. There are two councils in the schools – a student council and an advisory council for the Quantum Project – which allow the youth members to make recommendations for events and make decisions on student issues.
Bethel/COR	Youth workers provide educational and recreation youth services, bring youth to Board of Education meetings. Hired five youth/Links workers to do outreach to younger people (3-25) in the community.
Blocks Together	A youth council chooses issues to work on, these have focused mostly on safety and anti-drug work in the community. Youth members also work on issues with adults when their interests are the same, i.e., for the school facilities campaign youth spoke to officials and the press. One youth member serves on the Board of Directors.
Brighton Park	Youth are active and integral members, serve on the Board of Directors, have a strong Youth Council whose Steering Committee of 30-40 youth meets each week to identify issues of interest/concern. Youth also attend trainings, run meetings, and talk with the press.
Chicago ACORN	Youth are active members, attend meetings and demonstrations, and participate in decision-making. Youth interests are included and help decide focus of campaigns. For example, instead of focusing a campaign on police brutality, ACORN chose to focus on police accountability, a strategy which was inclusive of the youth concerns.
COFI	Training helps youth develop a vision of their community, family, school, and lives.
Generation Y	Youth provide leadership through deciding what issues to pursue and campaigns to organize. They have been involved in research around discipline: interviewing students, meeting with school personnel, and writing FOIA requests. Some of the youth are part-time paid staff members: recruiting in their high school, running training workshops, and facilitating workshops.
Hope Center	Youth hold no decision-making roles, participate in peer mentorship and workshops which create opportunities for self-determination.
Logan Square	Youth committee meets weekly to determine their concerns and resolutions, they have a vote on the Executive Board, and present their resolutions to LSNA committees and the organization, as needed.
Northwest Neighborhood Federation	Youth are active participants: speak at hearings, define issues, conduct research, organize student leaders, and present organizing trainings. Currently they have no representation on the NNF Board, but this is expected to change at their Fall 2001 Convention.
West Town	Peer mentors work in elementary schools, beginning to provide youth leadership development

TABLE 5. Chicago Organizations' Budget, Funding Sources, and Staff Table

FOCUS of ORGANIZATION	NAME	BUDGET	FUNDING SOURCES (in percent)*							RAISE OWN MONEY?	TOTAL STAFF	EDU ORGNZRS	FULL-TIME EDU ORGNZRS
			F	C	G	I	M	E	O				
Community organizations that organize a constituency to improve local schools and at system level	Bethel New Life Inc., Community Organizing for Re-Neighboring (COR)	$250,000 - 500,000	60-79	1-19	20-39	1-19		1-19	1-19	Yes, 80-100%	9	5	None, four work on education 40% and one spend 20% on education organizing.
	Blocks Together	$250,000-500,000	80-100				1-19	1-19		No	8	5	Two, the other three work on education 20% of the time.
	Brighton Park Neighborhood Council	$250,000 - 500,000	60-79		20-39	1-19		1-19		Yes, 80-100%	9	7	One, the six other organizers spend less than 25% of their time on education organizing. Currently looking to hire a second full time education organizer

*F = Non-profit foundations, C = Corporations, G = Government, I = Individuals, M = Membership, E = Events, and O = Other

FOCUS of ORGANIZATION	NAME	BUDGET	FUNDING SOURCES (in percent)*							RAISE OWN MONEY?	TOTAL STAFF	EDU ORGNZRS	FULL-TIME EDU ORGNZRS
			F	C	G	I	M	E	O				
Community organizations that organize a constituency to improve local schools and at system level (continued)	Chicago ACORN	More than $500,000	40-59 50	20-39 25			1-19 10		15% grassroots fundraising	Yes, 80-100%	16	5	None, the five organizers spend 1/2-3/4 of their time on education organizing.
	Generation Y (Youth)	Less than $100,000	80-100			1-19	1-19	1-19		Yes, 1-19%	4	4	None, three quarter-time staff work 75% on education, and the other organizer spends 50% of their time on education.
	Northwest Neighborhood Federation	$250,000 - 500,000	60-79	1-19	1-19			1-19		Yes, 80-100%	9	2	Two

*F = Non-profit foundations, C = Corporations, G = Government, I = Individuals, M = Membership, E = Events, and O = Other

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FOCUS of ORGANIZATION	NAME	BUDGET	FUNDING SOURCES (in percent)*							RAISE OWN MONEY?	TOTAL STAFF	EDU ORGNZRS	FULL-TIME EDU ORGNZRS
			F	C	G	I	M	E	O				
Community organizations that organize a constituency to improve local schools and at system level (continued)	Rogers Park Community Action Network	Less than $100,000	60-79 75				20-39 25	1-19 10			2	1	None
Community organizations that organize a constituency to improve local public schools	Lugenia Burns Hope Center for New World Organizers	$250,000 – 500,000	80-100			1-19			1-19		2	1	One
	Logan Square Neighborhood Association	More than $500,000	60-79	1-19	20-39 30		1-19 15	1-19 15		Yes, 80-100%	20	10	Four
	Organization of the Northeast (ONE)	$250,000 – 500,000	60-79	1-19			1-19		1-19	Yes, 80-100%	8	2	One

*F = Non-profit foundations, C = Corporations, G = Government, I = Individuals, M = Membership, E = Events, and O = Other

FOCUS of ORGANIZATION	NAME	BUDGET	FUNDING SOURCES (in percent)*							RAISE OWN MONEY?	TOTAL STAFF	EDU ORGNZRS	FULL-TIME EDU ORGNZRS
			F	C	G	I	M	E	O				
Community organizations that organize a constituency to improve local public schools (continued)	West Town Leadership United	$250,000 – 500,000	80-100		1-19		1-19	1-19		Yes, 80-100%	5	3	Two, the other organizer spends 1/4 of their time on education organizing
Community organizations that work to improve local schools	Association House of Chicago	More than $500,000	1-19	1-19	60-79			20-39		Yes, 0-19%	Over 200		Staff organize informally because of their political belief in organizing for community change
	Beverly Area Planning Association	$250,000 – 500,000		1-19		1-19	40-59	20-39		Yes, 80-100%			
Citywide school reform support organizations providing organizing assistance to community groups	Chicago School Leadership Development Cooperative	$250,000 – 500,000	80-100			1-19					7	3	Two one half time staff person spends 2/3 of their time on education organizing, and one quarter time staff spends 1/3 of their on education organizing

*F = Non-profit foundations, C = Corporations, G = Government, I = Individuals, M = Membership, E = Events, and O = Other

FOCUS of ORGANIZATION	NAME	BUDGET	FUNDING SOURCES (in percent)*							RAISE OWN MONEY?	TOTAL STAFF	EDU ORGNZRS	FULL-TIME EDU ORGNZRS
			F	C	G	I	M	E	O				
Citywide school reform support organizations (continued)	Community Organizing and Family Issues (COFI)	$250,000 – 500,000	60-79		20-39	1-19		1-19	1-19		11	4	None, four spend 70% of their time on education organizing.
	Neighborhood Capitol Budget Group (NCBG)	$100,000 – 249,000	80-100				1-19				11	4	Two, one half time staff works full time as well, and one quarter time staff works 1/4 time on education organizing
Citywide school reform groups that organize a constituency	Designs for Change	More than $500,000	80-100	1-19	1-19					Yes, 80-100%	14	4	Four
	Parents United for Responsible Education	$250,000 - 500,000	80-100			1-19	1-19			Yes, 1-19%	4	3 advocate trainers	None, all 3 advocate trainers spend 25% of their time on education organizing
	Schools First (SF)	Do not have 501 (c)(3) status										Members organize with DFC staff organizers	None

*F = Non-profit foundations, C = Corporations, G = Government, I = Individuals, M = Membership, E = Events, and O = Other

Five Areas of Effective Advocacy Practice

LEADERSHIP

Maintaining a Strong Organization

- Leadership for the project
- Dedication of members to systems advocacy to improve services to substantial numbers of children at risk
- Learning opportunities for project members
- Commitment to improve internal management
- Sustaining needed funds

STRATEGY

Developing a strategy that shapes action

- Cycle of intervention and analysis
- Clarity of the advocates' strategy
- Focus on a subsystem of the education system that shapes services to a particular group of children at risk
- Focus on central issues determining the quality of services to children
- Envisioning a clear solution
- Bringing about or capitalizing on a major policy change
- Focus on implementation

INFORMATION

Gathering comprehensive, accurate information

- Documenting problems and solutions
- Gathering information about relevant systems

SUPPORT

Building support

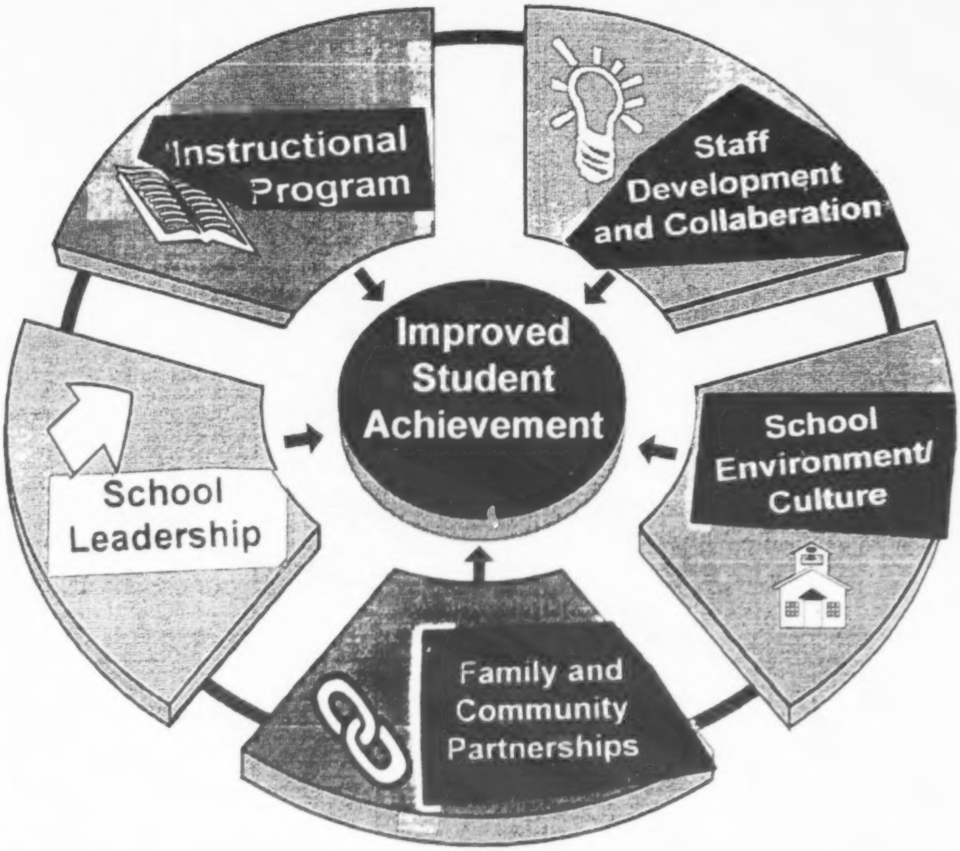
- Using mass media effectively
- Using your own media effectively
- Developing a support network
- Building a committed constituency

INTERVENTION

Intervening to improve the schools

- Intervening at multiple levels
- Using multiple intervention tactics
- Carrying out specific intervention tactics competently
- Bargaining orientation
- Assisting educators without undermining advocacy
- Persistence

TABLE 7. Five Essential Supports for Student Learning


Instructional Program
Staff Development and Collaberation
Improved Student Achievement
School Leadership
School Environment/ Culture
Family and Community Partnerships

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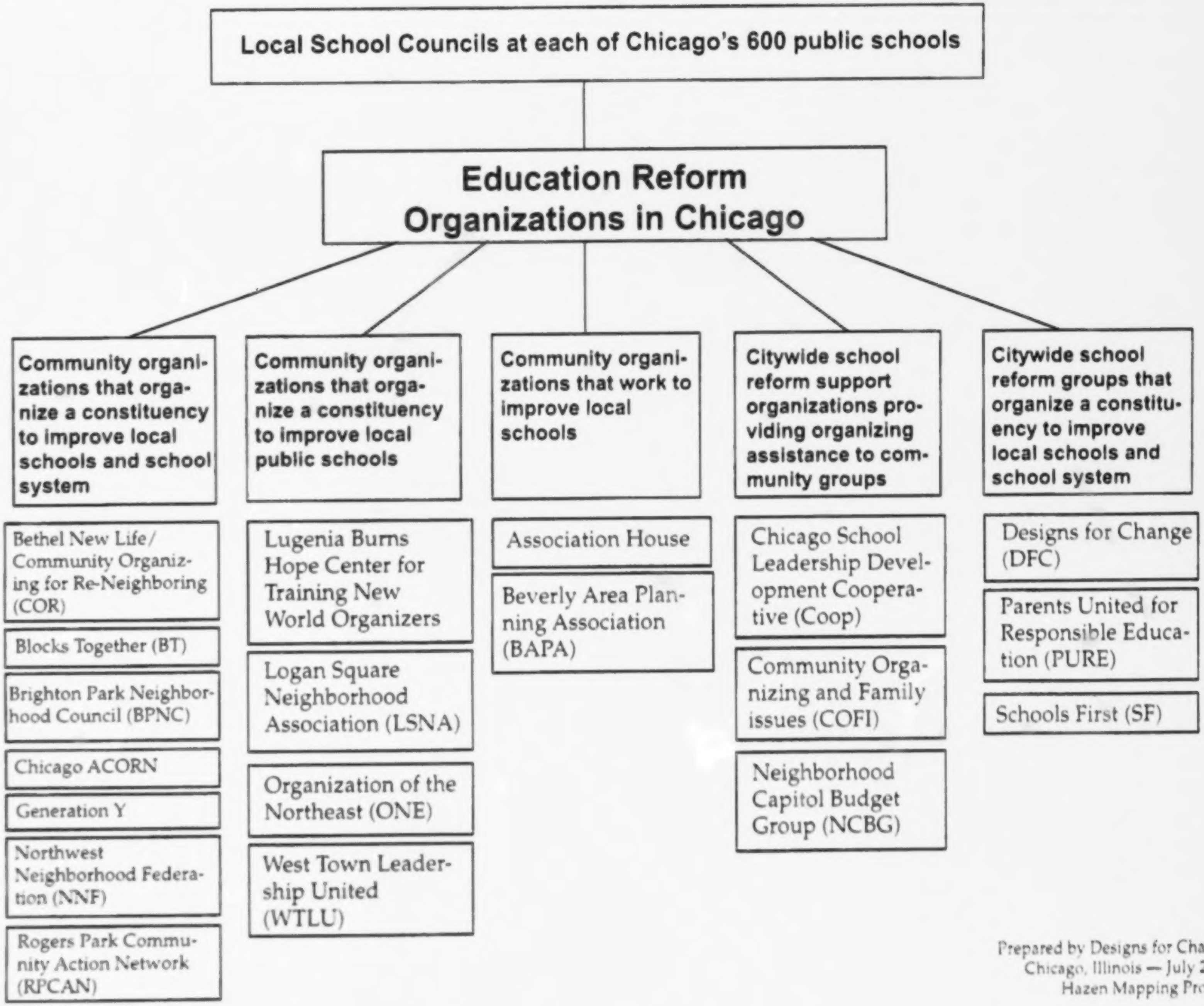
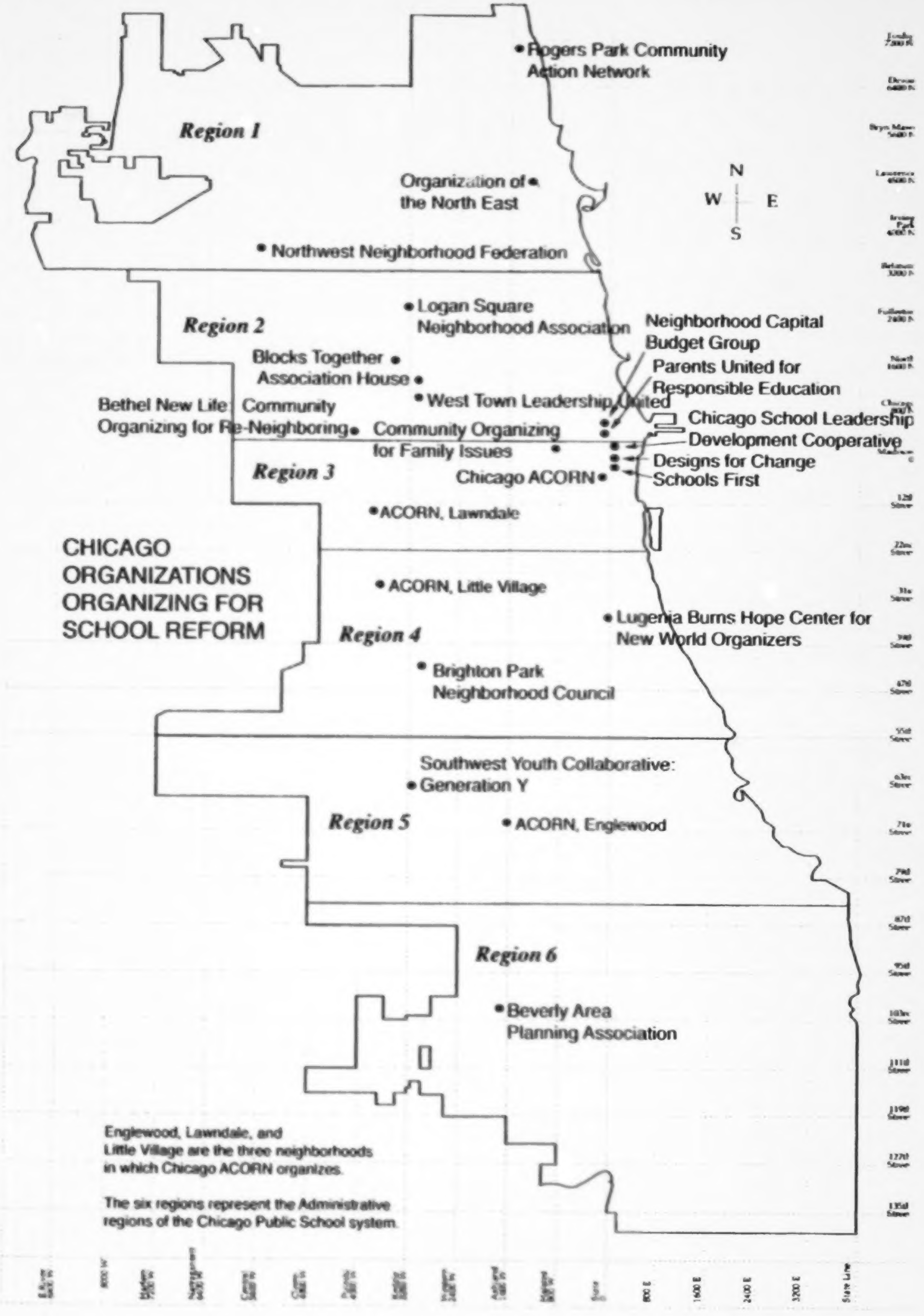

Local School Councils at each of Chicago's 600 public schools
Education Reform Organizations in Chicago
Community organizations that organize a constituency to improve local schools and school system
Community organizations that organize a constituency to improve local public schools
Community organizations that work to improve local schools
Citywide school reform support organizations providing organizing assistance to community groups
Citywide school reform groups that organize a constituency to improve local schools and school system
Bethel New Life/ Community Organizing for Re-Neighboring (COR)
Blocks Together (BT)
Brighton Park Neighborhood Council (BPNC)
Chicago ACORN
Generation Y
Northwest Neighborhood Federation (NNF)
Rogers Park Community Action Network (RPCAN)
Lugenia Burns Hope Center for Training New World Organizers
Logan Square Neighborhood Association (LSNA)
Organization of the Northeast (ONE)
West Town Leadership United (WTLU)
Association House
Beverly Area Planning Association (BAPA)
Chicago School Leadership Development Cooperative (Coop)
Community Organizing and Family issues (COFI)
Neighborhood Capitol Budget Group (NCBG)
Designs for Change (DFC)
Parents United for Responsible Education (PURE)
Schools First (SF)

Prepared by Designs for Change
Chicago, Illinois — July 2001
Hazen Mapping Project


Rogers Park Community Action Network
Region 1
Organization of the North East
N
W
E
S
Northwest Neighborhood Federation
Logan Square Neighborhood Association
Region 2
Neighborhood Capital Budget Group
Blocks Together
Association House
Parents United for Responsible Education
West Town Leadership United
Bethel New Life: Community Organizing for Re-Neighboring
Community Organizing for Family Issues
Chicago School Leadership Development Cooperative
Region 3
Designs for Change
Chicago ACORN
Schools First
ACORN, Lawndale
ACORN, Little Village
Lugenia Burns Hope Center for New World Organizers
Region 4
Brighton Park Neighborhood Council
Southwest Youth Collaborative: Generation Y
Region 5
ACORN, Englewood
Region 6
Beverly Area Planning Association
State Line

CHICAGO ORGANIZATIONS ORGANIZING FOR SCHOOL REFORM

Englewood, Lawndale, and Little Village are the three neighborhoods in which Chicago ACORN organizes.

The six regions represent the Administrative regions of the Chicago Public School system.

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